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Singing IN THE Rain

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Anne Shannon Monroe

SINGING IN THE RAIN

By Anne Shannon Monroe

Here are heart-to-heart talks made out of the matter of life itself, inspiring, sympathetic, human, personal. They are lessons on beautiful living, by a woman who knows her subject well.

Their range is wide. There are talks on our unseen gifts and how we can use them, guides to better understanding, helpful advice on the raising of children, a sympathetic and heartening piece for lonely and troubled people, a pointed essay on good manners and happy ways, a golden lesson on silver linings, and a very sane discussion on how our imperfections may be our best blessings. Above all, these pieces stress family love and the highest home-keeping, the home of unselfishness, and quiet prayers, the home founded on old-fashioned religion.

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SINGING IN THE RAIN

ANNE SHANNON MONROE

Singing In The Rain

The New Home Library
NEW YORK

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY BROTHER

THE REVEREND ANDREW MONROE

WHOSE BRAVE AND BEAUTIFUL LIFE
SPENT CARRYING THE LIGHT ON THE
FAR WESTERN FRONTIER, WAS AS A
CONTINUAL "SINGING IN THE RAIN"

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SINGING IN THE RAIN

SINGING IN THE RAIN

I

SINGING IN THE RAIN

IT WAS my experience recently to settle down for some months in one of our fifty-seven varieties of Oregon climate where the rain comes down in a steady gray drizzle most of the winter. I did not like it. I said, hovering drearily by a fire, "This rain interferes with everything—with golf, sunsets, clothes drying on the line."

Then my attention was arrested by the boy who brought the milk. Early in the morning he came, singing like some lark telling the world it was spring. He interested me. I ran down the steps to see him.

"Fine morning to be out," I ventured, wondering about his mind.

"You betcher!" he came back out of his dripping raindrops. "Saw a fox in the cañon—a silver fox! If I kin ketch 'im, I'll tame 'im!"

The boy hurried off, resuming his cheerful

song, and I sat thinking. The sun didn't shine —but there was a fox in the cañon, a silver fox! A visitor from the mighty mountains with all his mountain life and atmosphere upon him. . . . I got into rain clothes and set out to find the fox. . . . I never found him—but I found so much else: great, still forest trees bearing the dignity of centuries of life, and at their feet the most enchanting mosses and lichens that sprouted but yesterday, marvellous growths that only incessant rain could make possible. I found Oregon grape, that shiny, waxy-leafed shrub that borders every road and roofs every trail in this green-winter land, glistening in the rain and sending back points of light like newly polished mahogany. I found pussy willows bursting toward fulfilment. I found, in the terraced heights of this mountainous country, tints and shadings unimagined: soft, ghostly grays, draperies for a dream; blues like giant flame-shadows and as illusive between the varying banks of forest green—and I found an artist perched on a hill under a huge umbrella, trying to catch the lovely colours through their veils of silver mist.

"Marvellous—marvellous!" he breathed, scarcely seeing me.

And I had been blind to all this beauty, ab-

sorbed in regrets over a little guttapercha ball, clothes drying on the line, the sun—that day's glare of utility. I ceased complaining of what was not in the country and set about finding what was. And, oh, I found so many things freshly lovely and inspiring, that after a time I didn't miss the sun at all, or golf, while clothes dried quite as well in a basement.

I wonder if this isn't one of the steadying understandings we especially need to get right now; that there may not be the things in our lives we are looking for, there may be upheavals that throw us out of the beaten track, but if we will only put aside repining, and briskly set about discovering the riches that are all about us, I wonder if we won't all find plenty to set us singing in the rain?

I have never been much cheered by the "stencilled smile," the false front, the pretending that there was no pain when pain was there, that there was no trouble when trouble stalked, that there was no death when Death laid his cold hand upon one dearer to us than life: but I have been tremendously cheered by the *brave* front; the imagination that could travel past the trouble and see that there were still joys in the world; the vision so clear that, recognizing death to a beautiful body, recognizes at the same time life to the

spirit, and while humanly grieved over the passing of the one, can rejoice in the greater freedom of the other. It isn't that we should fool ourselves with fairy tales and denials; it is that we should open our minds to a full recognition of life as experience—experience made up of joys and sorrows, rough places and smooth ones, disappointments and happy surprises, smashing cataclysms and glorious discoveries: see all this and be brave enough to face it, dealing with each change in its turn, directed always by the influences within rather than those without: then pack up the knapsack, cut a good stout stick, and once more travel on with face toward the goal and a song on the lips.

The little boy who sang so blithely under my window was not singing to try to make himself forget the rain. He had already forgotten the rain. He was singing out of the pure joy of his exploring young soul . . . he had found a silver fox in the cañon! Well, to one awake to life, to its symbolism as well as its facts, there is always a silver fox in the cañon!

Two wives living in small, inadequate houses had been all ready to build new ones when the war came and delayed them. Then their husbands' businesses had to be readjusted, and they were once more delayed.

Said one: "I am not sorry to postpone the going. Every nook and corner of this dear little house is crowded with sacred memories. There are the marks on the door casing where we took the children's heights on their birthdays. There's the stain on the study floor where poor old Fido dragged himself after the burglar shot him. There's the mended window pane that Jackie broke with his first snowball, and Daddy was so proud of his aim he wouldn't punish him. . . . Poor Jackie, his aim was just as straight in France, they tell us. Oh, I'll be sorry to leave, though of course we must have a larger house with the children all growing up."

Said the other: "This wretched little house is battered and banged from end to end with the wear and tear of the children! I'm ashamed to entertain my club in it now, and I just don't see how I can go on living in it another year!"

Just the difference in the two women, you see —not a bit of difference in the situations!

Two college girls nearly of an age belong to a family badly crippled by the war. Lilian rides buoyantly on the crest of life's wave; Letty is sunk in its depths. The mother, a brave-spirited woman, will wash and dye and make over an old dress for Lilian, and Lilian will receive it with a hearty: "Such a gallant little

dress, Mother! Here it comes through the mill just as perky as ever! I love it!" And she will eagerly get into it, and prance about, pretending she is a fashion model, carrying her head, oh, so high, as though satin and ermine decked out her fair young body, while the mother looks on with smiles forcing back her tears.

Then she will go through the same tedious process for Letty, and Letty will groan out: "Do I have to wear that old thing again? Every girl in school will know it's made over!"

And the mother's heart, that had fluttered up to a bit of joy in the success of her creation, sinks like lead in her breast.

"I never thought I would come to anything like this," moans one of these indigo distillers.

Well, why didn't you? What was the matter with your imagination? You knew all the time "this" was in the world. Why shouldn't you come to it the same as any one else? Why should you be marked for special leniency? You are just one in the surging wave of humanity making up your day; there is nothing unusual about you. There can be—it all depends on how you meet changed conditions—but there isn't—so far.

"Well, I'm glad someone in the world has something to be cheerful about," moans another,

on hearing a laugh ring out gaily—herself doing about as much for the gaiety of nations as the head-hunters.

And letters! How they love to send it through the mails, this indigo of their distilling; send it like a shot from a hypodermic needle under the skin of someone they love, for one must read one's letters—there's no escape, as from personal contact, where you can take your hat and go. It's not uncommon to hear among young women struggling for a foothold in business or some art in any of the great cities dialogues such as this:

"What's the matter? You're blue as ink!"

"Oh, I had a letter from home, that's all."

"All? Well, it's enough—I know 'em!"

It isn't women alone that distil these draughts of indigo. A fussy old bachelor I know is the dread of all the camping parties, because he just must superintend the cooking, and then if the dishes don't all come out together, he won't eat. I've seen him sit under a tree, sulking, chewing his moustache, his face red as a turkey-cock's wattles, because the coffee boiled up two minutes before the fish were ready to lift from the fire. But as often as I have had to laugh at this dear old bachelor, brooding off under a tree while the woods and water were calling gloriously, I

have had to think to myself: So must the Creator look on His children in their larger bafflings: one loses money—and he won't play; one loses health—and he won't play; one loses love—and he won't play: one after another they refuse to play the Great Game gamily, and sit apart black and downcast, spoiling their own lives and casting gloom over everyone about them. You can laugh at the old bachelor who won't play because his coffee and his fish didn't come out together, but to One Higher, you, brooding off in your corner about something equally trivial in the larger contrasts of time with eternity, may seem quite as childish.

You never can tell, too, when you're fussy with what comes to you, but what you're being fussy with your kindest fate. The breaking up of programmes often brings the greatest blessings. A mistake, a cataclysm, and even better things bob up for you, as with the prospector who was compelled to tie his baulky mule to a juniper tree and back-track afoot for help. When he returned he found his mule had kicked open a pocket of gold, a far richer find than rewarded any of those whose mules had gone obediently ahead as their masters willed. Well, there you are: that's life. It isn't a mathematical science, and two and two do not always make four.

And you're not omnipotent, and your way may not always be the best way.

The dullest trip is that trip on which nothing unexpected happens, the dullest day is that day in which no unlooked-for occurrence obtrudes, and the dullest life is that life that gets into a groove of an exactly planned programme and stays there. Not that we shouldn't make programmes—goodness, no! But we should be flexible, ready to readjust them as fast as changing conditions require. We ate alligator pears and pâté-dé foie-gras yesterday, but we are eating cabbage and turnips to-day; very well, let us be sufficiently versatile in our tastes to appreciate the life-giving qualities of cabbage and turnips, and sufficiently philosophical to be glad we know what both extremes are like.

I know only one person who has apparently been able to shut off the usual avenues of the unpleasant: wealth removed want; death removed inharmonious relatives; transportation facilities remove tiresome environment; amusements remove boredom; and yet this young woman is the most miserable of mortals. You can't shut off all the avenues of unpleasantness without shutting off the avenues of pleasantness as well. You can close your ears to earth's disagreeable sounds—but you will never again hear

the songs of birds. The most impoverished life is that life so protected that nothing real gets through to it. It's rather a slam, too, as if old Nature had taken one glance at it, then turned away as from some unpromising cocoon, and said, "Oh, never mind, we won't bother to hatch that one"—as if it didn't matter.

> Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough—

Throw away the old. If it was good, we are impressed from its mould—we no longer need it. Throw away yesterday's mould; accept to-day's. For it's life that we all want, life in abundance. We want to swim in life as an aviator swims in the far reaches of the air. We want to feel many contacts, many phases. Nothing that life could do to you could be so stunting as the limitations of a narrowly fixed routine. Can you imagine wanting to fly through a walled-in tunnel? And yet there are natures so settled in materiality, that so love a fixed security, that they may even think of this as desirable . . . air lanes segregated.

Then be glad when things go differently. Take it as a compliment; you are worth bothering with. Forget that frustrated plan and make a new one. Get curious about the life going

on about you. Fall into the habit of asking, "What shall I see next?"—as would a cheerful traveller looking from his car window, and expecting neither skyscrapers in the desert nor mirages in the Hudson tubes. Cultivate a little more the disposition of the hardy explorer and less that of the ape. For it's aping that so often stills the song on the lips; aping others in their way of living, their clothes; aping life as it is lived otherwhere, or as we once lived it or planned to live it. We had a dream of a certain kind of future, and we borrowed rosiness from it to tint up the immediate skies. Then—splash! We were deep into a future far different, and instead of letting the dream go, we hold it fast for comparisons—and comparisons are for ever odious. Gloom and depression follow, and there is no singing in the rain, no singing in the sun, no singing anywhere at all.

At a beach I know well, agate-hunting is one of the zestful occupations. People of all ages are busy at it, crouched down near the pounding waves. You don't see the successful agate-hunters wasting any time on a dull gray stone. They lift it, no light shines through, and they instantly drop it and pick up another. And yet there the stones are, all mixed up together, the dull gray ones and the lovely clear ones, and it's

only that one becomes deft at dropping a worthless one and trying another that the pocket is filled with moss agates, ribbon agates, water agates—all the lovely souvenirs of earth's inspired hours. Well, that's life. If you've picked up an ugly gray outlook and insist on hugging it to your breast, you will get from it just the worthlessness that is in it. Better dash it down and make room for a treasure of brightness that may lie right at your feet.

But—you say—the black mood comes, and what can you do about it? What do you do when a mouse gets in the room? Sit and dwell on the idea? You know you don't. You go after it hammer and tongs, up on chairs, down under the couch, out through the kitchen and over the porch; and then to make sure of future safety to yourself, you set a trap. But when the black mood comes, what then? You are sitting alone at your needlework, perhaps, when the pest attacks you, and you begin to stir it—over and over and around and around, getting fresh poison from every fresh stirring. Before you know it your eyes become set, your face deep-lined, and you're off on a regular woe-jag, poisoning yourself and sending poison out on the ether of air to blight the lives of others. Now, no one is accountable for what comes into his mind, only

for what he harbours there. Just suppose, then, at the first approach of the pest you took alarm —as if a mouse had slipped under your skirt. Suppose you sprang up, threw down your work, and changed your occupation to something that required every bit of your brain power: something creative, demanding thought and manipulation, like fitting a modern dinner-gown pattern on your old graduation dress, or freshly dipping and blocking your window hangings. Or you might go to the library and read a rattling good detective yarn, or take a long walk, or dig in the garden, or visit a sick friend, or go to a movie, or take a cold bath and get into new clothes. Anything under the sun to break the spell! Perhaps you are depressed from too much loneliness—then join a club or organize a new one. Perhaps your outlook is gloomy—then cut a window in a wall, add a porch on the cheeriest side of your house, increase your human contacts. Maybe there is not enough all-aloneness; it's a case of nerves from too many human contacts. Then fit up the attic or an old outhouse—a shed, chicken coop, any four walls that will hold you—and call it your "den" and defy the world to enter! A couple of hours alone daily where one did exactly as one pleased --read, or wrote, or relaxed, or meditated—

would change many a depressed, complaining housewife into the most buoyant and charming of women.

Native disposition is something, of course, but habit of mind is a great deal more. One woman overcame moodiness by conducting a funny column on a daily newspaper. The necessity of searching every happening for the funny angle, that she might get grist for her mill, opened up her mind to a philosophic slant on life that stayed with her.

"Laugh about it," a mother would say to her baby when he tumbled on his nose, or spilt his milk, or broke his little red wagon. "Las about it," he was presently saying back to her when the roast was tough, or the groceries were late, or the new gown failed to fit; and so the habit of good cheer was established between them.

Another mother so successfully trained her little boy to resourcefulness that it became a boomerang—she was utterly unable to punish him. Put him on a chair in the centre of the room and tell him to stay there—for some naughtiness—and before her back was turned he had made a ship of the chair, a sea of the room, and would be having a perfectly beautiful time playing shipwreck. Stand him in a corner, and the corner instantly became a cave and he'd

be deep in a fight with bears. Put him to bed, and he'd make a tent of the bedding and have the loveliest time playing Indian. Maddening, perhaps, at times, but what a promising habit of mind with which to start the big journey! Is it worth time and patience to secure? What more so! For how spankingly bracing, in contrast with the dragging-down, depressive attitude, is the attitude of the thoroughbred, of never being downed by circumstance, of going always with the head up, the eyes clear, and the vision fixed on the conquering way; of having one's quality grounded in one's self rather than in one's possessions!

And it's all about us everywhere, the brave attitude. From France come reports of the wonderful spirit manifested by members of old families who are now living in the basements of what were once palatial mansions. "This old house knew many a famous guest," cried one of these, "but this new home of ours, this dug-out —it has sheltered many a brave soldier. We live in greater pride . . . a new glory is on us."

A blind man I know is one of the most cheerful travellers in the great invisible army of dauntless souls. He is editor of an important newspaper, and he does his work with such human insight,

and such an appreciation of the beauty of life, such sympathy for the humblest of people and all their little tragedies, for the greatest of people and all their tremendous responsibilities, that troubled ones often seek him out and are astonished to find him groping in the dark for their hand. He'll describe to you in glowing terms the hallelujah chorus of birds in the early morning above a stream that flows calmly: "Not one of those tempestuous little mountain torrents," he'll explain, very particular about its character, "but a calm, steadily flowing stream with the serenity of eternity." And he'll tell you how the drops of water glisten like diamonds on the points of the leaves when the sun comes out after a shower. Oh, he'll make your breast ache with the beauty he pictures—the beauty he sees with his blind eyes and that you never quite see with your sighted ones. He didn't need eyes to see with. . . . God knows, it seems, when we must have the physical instrument, all the padding of "things," the crutches and props of circumstance.

And there's courageous little Tama, who must go draggingly always, because a nurse dropped her when she was a baby—Tama, who never ran and played with other children, never bounced around in the jolly surf, never rolled a hoop or

went on roller skates—can never have the joys of life most young women fill their dreams with —but to whom people go with their complainings and to them she'll say briskly, "Well, you can't have everything with a bowl of soup," and then go ahead and help find out just what they can have, and how fine it all is, after all.

And there's a dear old factory worker in my neighbourhood who is for ever shining up into life with a wonderful discovery—in a vacated house she found a lot of old rags that will wash up just fine for rugs! And now that the war is over, one can once more get sugar sacks at the corner grocery and have again the luxury of new underwear—a thing denied during the sugar-sack famine, apparently. And a little boy who lights up all over and comes running with the great news, "Auntie, Auntie, the moon's come back!" overjoyed that the little boys in China are through with it, and it is his turn to have it again. And an old man whose eyes shine as if they for ever saw visions—a lonely old man who mends shoes all day. But when it was suggested that he should get out-of-doors on Sundays for his health's sake, came back in an outburst of beautiful confidence: "Ah, I do, I do—every Sunday. You see, I have a grave to keep." Not in gloom, not in heaviness of spirit, but in joy over a serv-

ice he still could render the partner of his happier years.

And once, on a long wilderness hike, I found one of these dauntless spirits in a tiny shack buried deep in a little lost valley of the Sierras. I stirred her up as one might a wren in its nest, inadvertently. She was glad that I came, because—she wondered—had I seen the world from the top of the Sierras? And what was it like up there? It developed that she had lived always in the valley and her husband had but recently died, so, as she put it, she must make a new programme. But she must see the world first from the top of the Sierras. We talked for the better part of an afternoon, there on her crude doorstep in the shadow of the great mountains, and I left and tramped on, not hearing her name and she not hearing mine, neither of us being curious, so interested was each of us in what the other's mind had recorded, mine from the mountain-top looking down, hers from the valley looking up. Long after I discovered that she was one of our best-loved poets, tucked off there in her wilderness nest—known to the world only by her brave, sweet song.

Often she appears—that special woman—in a long line coming to meet one in stranger towns. You wonder about her; you can't forget her

. . . there is something, you can't say just what. I remember one who came like something buoyantly upspringing from the earth, a rose in a north wind. I couldn't help making inquiries. Her husband was in the penitentiary, and she was earning a living with her needle for her little boy—and she had been a gently nurtured girl and married for love. Apparently it had never occurred to her to draw apart from the life of her kind, to shut herself in and spend her days brooding, using her little son as a sort of animated weeping-post. This baby was having the only babyhood he would ever have; soon it would be the only childhood, the only life. So she crowded back the atmosphere from her own troubles and took a firm stand in the brightness of life for her child's happy days.

And once—and this sometimes seems to me the most marvellous vehicle of all for the message—I found in the cindery crater of an extinct volcano a bravely rooted bleeding-heart, all delicately hung with blood-filled blossoms. Where did it get its nourishment in those volcanic cinders? Where—we might ask—do they all get their nourishment—all those who root and bloom so beautifully in such untoward soil?

For everywhere we see them, in every community, in every smallest circle—these high

souls of earth—with the light of battle in their eyes and the God of battles at their back, carrying on unfalteringly, as the Crusaders carried on, as the boys in France carried on—but magnificently alone, without the cheer of stirring band music or a commanding officer's orders. And they march on, and march on, and march on, up through the years . . . but they do hear music—music never heard by those of the drooped head and the dragging feet, the music of God's harmonies . . . and they do hear the tramp of marching comrades, those other brave ones who will not be beaten to earth . . . for they have joined an invisible army whose hands reach out to each new recruit. . . . And so she is not so alone as she seems to you, that brave-spirited woman in your own circle at whom you wonder.

Oh, the bravery of people, it seems to me, is the most splendid spectacle in the world to-day! A lump rises in the throat, and we lift our eyes, and our arms, and our voices, and we cry aloud, "These shall not be brave in vain!" The world shall catch their suggestion—not that other of pessimism and depression and doubt, but this finer thing—and move on surely through the muck of the lower lands to the heights of clearer vision!

Then sing! Sing in the rain, sing in the sunshine, sing from the mountain-tops and the valleys! Let all your being sing out that it is good to be alive, good to be a part of a world struggling to find itself, good to be the very least in the ranks of the rebuilders and recreators, of the valiant of earth, the army commanded by God!

II

THE OPEN CHANNEL

THE sun comes up these days with such gentle radiance, sending all-pervasive colour through the eastern sky, paling the morning star into insignificance, penetrating every existing thing; the farthest green tip of the long, swaying fir boughs and the sap that runs deep in their centuries-old trunks; one rose that hangs late on the highest ...nch of the roof-climbing vine, and its root deep buried in the mould; the old man just about finishing life in the house across the street, rousing him to a new day of work, and the little baby in his crib up under the eaves, who wakes to catch at a golden beam that touches his petal-soft cheek. . . . And some people doubt God!

I wonder if one reason is because of houses? When I wake, out under the trees, I think so. Imagine opening your eyes in the lap of the swaying rhythmic earth shrouded in beauty and mystery, one with the moon and the sun and the stars, one with the rolling tides, the seas pound-

ing on the beaches, the winds beating on the earth, one with the whole Great Plan—imagine all this as compared with waking in a house, perhaps torn out of sleep by a blatant alarm clock, to four walls that close you in with a medley of tinselly trappings—a dresser over there, knick-knacks in silver and ivory. . . . Is it any wonder that our minds, which tend to narrow themselves to outlook, get a sort of pin-head vision of life?

I was a guest recently at an excellent club of women in a wealthy suburb—well-groomed women in rustling silks, who had come in their own cars—and a communi[illegible]hurch representative called and asked permission to present his case. He was a circumspect gentleman of middle age, unctuous, ingratiating, eager to please. He explained that he wished to start a community church in their neighbourhood which now had no church, and he hoped for their coöperation. It would be a church, he earnestly assured the ladies, to which no one could object, and of a type to draw no "objectionable" people; a church that scarcely could be recognized as a church—no steeple, nothing in the least churchy, quite bungalowish, in fact. The clergyman in charge would be a man of the very highest culture, drawing a large salary—the salary guaran-

teed. He named the salary in round figures; he hinted, as a probe to receptivity, that if there was not sufficient coöperation, this salary would move on and be spent elsewhere. He had chosen a large lot so as not to be too close to any one, and if any lady present objected to his location, if it was too near any of their homes, he would find another gladly, go just anywhere they might suggest. He asked only to be allowed to fit in with their plans—he didn't wish to disturb anything, or be in any one's way, or spoil any one's neighbourhood. . . . In a moment of mind wandering I got the impression that it was a pest-house he was trying to locate in their midst.

God to be let in under cover, heavily camouflaged!

I slipped into a public meeting in a downtown hall where a college professor was advertised to speak on "the very latest word in the new psychology"; a dingy audience, frankly tired, but hopeful; the professor, young, sure of himself. His "last word" turned out to be mostly a denial of many of the unimportant claims in the name of "spiritism," his main argument being that they couldn't be true because they had never happened to him.

A woman beside me whispered in a dispirited

tone: "We're the backwash, that's all; people who've quit going to churches and haven't found anything else. . . . See the same ones every time. . . . Never do get anything."

"Why do you come?" I asked.

"Same's everyone else. Always looking for something. Never find it."

I thought of easier-minded ones I know, people who don't struggle much, who fall unthinkingly into the religious life they have inherited; bowing their heads in prayer with their minds on a torn hymnbook—anything; resting in a lull of development, so much fought out by ancestors, so much to be fought out by descendants—they resting on a sort of plateau, neither up nor down. I thought of those who use religion as a narcotic to deaden them to personal problems, who make of God a burden-bearer, loading on Him all their responsibilities, escaping responsibility themselves, and justifying this dodging attitude in the name of religion. I thought of the gloom, the heaviness, the dulness with which many people invest life when governed by the spirit, thinking this is being religious, when all the time gloom, heaviness, dulness are but the weight of materiality crowding in. I thought of those to whom black tragedy comes as a thunderbolt, who, back to the wall, turn wildly and appeal to God, the

only One who can help . . . the God who was there all the time, in the health of their days, to give them guidance—there, but neglected. I thought of those who trace their life course by the stars, by the lines in their palms, by the bumps on their heads, by the cards—and in the past few years by the ouija board—pathetically side-tracked. I thought of mothers I know who are worried: "No, Tommy isn't getting the religious instruction he ought to have. He doesn't go to Sunday-school as I did. The children don't, some way." Bewilderment, perplexity—Tommy running wild. I thought of men who leave it all to their wives. I thought of the retort of an older boy to his mother on being urged to go to church: "Why should I? It's just your club—same's mine."

Were we more convincing in our religious lives once, I wonder? I am not so sure. I know as a little girl many things puzzled me greatly. The elders of that day put such a mystery about religion, treating it as something you were to accept like castor oil, as it was ladled out to you, and ask no questions; a thing about which to be hushed, embarrassed, solemn, secretive—just like sex. I was very curious, I remember, about how people actually got into communion with

God. Everyone I knew claimed to be. I made inquiry.

"Pray, just pray," I was told.

But I pushed the matter further. "Say words to God and play like He is listening?" You see, I really wanted to know, just as I wanted the cook to tell me how she made a cake.

"Tut, tut," came back the sharp reproof, and "Tut, tut!"

Another thing that puzzled me was that so many people came right out of prayer and went on doing exactly as they had done before. I was a queer child, maybe—I expected it to make a difference. But so often it didn't—apparently. Mothers ordered their children about with the same brusqueness, fathers were just as cranky, homes continued to be the same colourless affairs that so many children planned to run away from. Even ministers got up from praying, brushing the dust off their knees; in communion with God and aware of dust on their knees! I couldn't make it out. I thought if one had really communed with the great God, a glory would cover his face, fill his being, make him gentle and lovely and good, and do things in a kinder, wiser way—but it didn't always happen.

I remember being at family prayers where

there was a very strict father. All were on their knees, and his prayer was long. Little Johnny, five years old, wriggling into a more comfortable position, scraped his foot along the floor. "Johnny!" reproved Johnny's papa in stentorian tones, right in the midst of his loud and commanding address to the Almighty. I was deeply puzzled to know how Johnny's papa, communing right there on his knees with the wonderful God, whom I never doubted, could be aware of so slight a thing as little Johnny's foot. I thought if I had got in conversation with the great God I would not be able to hear anything else. And I didn't doubt that Johnny's papa had, for he said he had, and the elders were not to be doubted.

Being an elder myself now, I have lost a good deal of the childish faith that elders always speak the truth, but I have grown in the impression that too often religious life is in the nature of that demonstrated by Johnny's papa—the ears pinned close to the ground to catch any breaking of their own established rule on earth, and only the voice lifted to God; spiritual communion accepted passively as a mere fact, rather than experienced—a vital, glowing experience through which light is shed on the personal life, vision given for action.

Now, *spiritual force is real* or it is nothing. *It is a power in the world as definite as electricity*, or it is non-existent. It furnishes a current for running purposes in the full-blooded health of our days, or it does nothing of value for us. It is a superforce, as surely there as is a reservoir of water for quenching a city's thirst—or it is not there at all. There can be no middle course. *Prayer clears the channel so that the spiritual force can flow in and become the internal driving power of our lives*, or it has no effect whatever. We have nursed the delusion that the mere act of praying has virtue, when all the time we can be as inefficient in prayer as in selling goods or washing dishes, and the one inefficiency is apt to be reflected in the other. Prayer has no virtue unless it clears the channel to God. Light comes with the cleared channel, with the release of the heavy hold of materiality; there's goldenness in it, there's glory in it, as with the sun in a new day. What comes out of our praying? That is the test. Unless there is light, we have not cleared the channel. The light proves the clearing; the life proves the will to follow the light.

It isn't always an easy thing to clear the channel. The world is too much with us. Sometimes we go to a concert, our minds all messed

up with problems, and we lose a good part of the first number before our spirits are caught up in the music; again, we go in freer mood and are caught up at once. So with spiritual communion. We may need hours off alone somewhere, or we may achieve it instantly, or it may flood in on us in a moment when we are not seeking it, when we are merely empty. Many of the purest illuminations come unsought into the life ever open to receive them, the life never cluttered. A glory bursts in—a thought comes—a truth—a picture—and we are as one transfigured, glowing in radiance; trying to hold it, never quite losing it, never losing the eternal truth of spiritual force as a fact to which it has given testimony. It is this kind of experience that makes us *know*. To this kind of experience we owe all that we do know in the world. Students, diggers, and delvers, may take the truth and use it, and go on from it to something else, but the original truth first came to a mind open and in tune.

Many of us may not fully realize the need to throw self entirely out, to put our own will to one side, to cease demanding that life conform to our desires—to empty ourselves absolutely—if we are to be led by the spirit, if we are to become an instrument for the spirit's use. We may not fully realize that we must become organized in

all our faculties under God, as a well-disciplined army under a general. We may not fully realize that letting go of ourselves, letting go of the tension, makes it possible for the light to penetrate us and to arouse our latent powers to action.

All who accomplish outstandingly know the secret of clearing away extraneous matter, the débris of daily living, and creating a great emptiness into which the matter on which they are bent emerges, grows, fills all the space. Then they go out again into the world of men and create even as they have seen. When they put self out, when they let God in, what mastery they attain! Then it is we have a George Washington who emerged from prayer with the power to endure for the sake of a great free people not only Valley Forge, but the politicians of his day; a John Wesley who emerged with the bravery to go out from little churches into the fields and preach to men where they were; a Joan of Arc, a Florence Nightingale, a Clara Barton, a Frances Willard, a Jane Addams, an Alice Freeman. Then we have the many people of earth who are able to live above the cruel shafts of personal misfortune and so soften and sweeten life for those about them as not to become in turn a misfortune in other lives. But when not spirit-

ually developed, when God is not let in, when self looms large in the clearing, we have geniuses of accomplishment who operate with diabolical cleverness against the very foundation purpose of life. Small souls that can darken and thwart all about them.

And what is the foundation purpose of life? Development under spiritual guidance. Development stirs all life like yeast. The earth and all that is in it and on it and above it are steadily developing, each thing according to the law of its nature; rock into soil, soil into plant life, plant life into food, food into body, body into an ever more perfect house for the spirit, the spirit into ever closer communion with the Great Spirit of which it is a part; everything, from the lowest cell to which we can trace life, steadily developing to a higher state. Had this not been the law, soil had remained rock, man had remained savage, and our foreheads would still be but an inch in height. When we fail to develop spiritually, we are out of harmony; we begin to disintegrate; destruction is on our track. There's discontent, heartache, a sense of futility and failure. Then it is we begin to search here and there for a panacea, for a thing to help us stand our lives. Any going against nature is destructive, and man's natural urge is toward

God. When he turns away from this urge, he is headed for ruin.

Mothers do not always sufficiently recognize the need of early attention to the open channel in the little new life. They watch zealously for all the proper signs of development in the child's physical or mental states, but not in his spiritual. And yet the spiritual can be started on the way to development as early as the mental, and who shall say it is not more important? There are small daily lessons that suggest the rights of others. Some mothers put out of his reach everything the baby is not to touch. Others lead the baby to an understanding that he is not to touch that which is not his. Which method turns the little new current in the right direction? He can be led early to make his contribution to the daily labour of living, if it is only to put a stick of wood in the box, a dish on the table. His little soul can be unfolded to an appreciation of beauty in the great world all about him. In his very babyhood he can be connected up with the universe, led to see that he is subject to laws written into his nature the same as are the sun, the moon, and the stars.

A little boy of three had been led to look nightly for his friends, the stars; for the moon, watching it grow from the tiniest baby to full

size and then disappear. He said wistfully, one evening, looking into the empty sky: "I wish we might have a moon to keep."

And he was drawn gently down by the fireside and told: "We have nothing to keep, dear, in all this wide world, only things to use and love. The trees, the flowers, the little children, even mothers and fathers, the house you live in, your little bed—everything goes away into some other form, some other life. That is why we must love it all every minute while we have it. Everything is all the time moving on, just like a train, never standing still. The only thing to do is to shine beautifully—like the moon—be lovely to each thing, as the moon is lovely to us. For all we can take away with us when our time comes to go is the memory of how nice we made it for everybody while we were here."

He was still a long time, gazing dreamily into the open fire. Then he had his own observation, lifting starry eyes: "I know now," he said, "why the little sparks fly up the chimney so fast. They are hurrying back to the big old forest which is their real home."

Just a little bedtime talk, just a bit of opening up the channel, just a direction to the stream, a pebble thrown in to keep it from flowing that way, to help it flow this—not difficult—and the

moon and the stars and the sparks are there for all the babies and all the mothers everywhere.

And what children we are, after all, never growing up, never growing beyond the softening influence of love and tenderness and beauty and sweet sounds and great thoughts, never ceasing to need a stronger hand clasping ours, never ceasing to need the leading of a light greater than is within us . . . pitiful little children stumbling in the dark, denying God and crying out to Him in one breath. But God does not pick His children who shall be strong on the earth; they pick him. Then why uncertainty? Why misgivings? Why timidity? Why lukewarmness? Why half-heartedness? Why don't we just wash our windows clean of all earthly matter and let the light flood in? Why don't we organize our faculties under God and go on to vibrant, joyous, confident living?

We might as well; for deep down underneath everything the fretting of the spirit will go on. Wander where we will, we can never get away from it; no worldly success will ever appease it, no failure deaden it. There is no panacea for life's ills, no opiate by which to dim consciousness, no place of oblivion in which to lose responsibility. But there is the open channel to the Great Harmony set going by Divinity when

the morning stars first sang together and the planets began their rhythmic course in the heavens. In this harmony there is life-adjustment; in this harmony there is healing for the wounds of time; in this harmony there is peace. And from this harmony we must believe we go out at last to that Greater Harmony which we sense in our most exalted moments, that Greater Harmony which is but another name for Oneness with God.

III

OUR UNSEEN GIFTS

IN THE heart of Crater Lake National Forest in the wilds of the Cascade Mountains, where snow lies man-deep most of the year, I came upon a beautiful life-size figure of a woman chiselled from a granite boulder. Mammoth encircling trees, centuries old, bent their boughs to it as a protectorate; far above, a patch of blue sky; leading to it, no path; on it, no name. But the squirrels had accepted it and were busy storing their winter nuts about its base. The forest had accepted it, closed it in, one with its eternal beauty and silence.

I moved softly away as having inadvertently set foot in some holy spot, but I could not get it out of my mind, and I could not let it alone. I must know the statue's history. How came it there? Who did it? And why in the lost depths of the great mountains? Who had chosen so to bury his work? Out in the world I made a stir about it, and at last I found the sculptor

and learned the truth. It was his offering to the forest, to its silence and repose, its beauty and fascination, but especially to *the mystery of its unseen life*. And at the same time it was an offering to the mystery of the unseen life in each mortal, that unseen self often kept under cover to the very end by the repressions and inhibitions of man.

Ever since hearing this explanation from the sculptor—who was something altogether different out in the world, a sculptor only in the virgin wilderness where his soul bounded free of the overlay and his latent abilities flamed into power—I think, when I look at drab people going drearily about: What monument of beauty have you reared in your own secret fastness to the thrilling thing God meant you to be? What lies hidden beneath that dun-coloured disguise? What repressed talents? What undeveloped gifts? What seed that might have flowered into its own peculiar beauty? For just as surely as God set going a machine in the Universe to create granite atom by atom, he set going a machine in each human being to create certain ends in the world, and failure to create these ends will leave him forlorn and bereft. No one was ever started on the short earthly way so poor that he was not provided with a special gift,

an emphasized ability, and the impulse eternally to seek its use.

Our own, ever our own, that is the human craving. Our own, though not so good, is better for us than any other, though that other is of the highest rank. We cannot take our cue from another; we must take it from our own selves. We mistakenly carry our aspirations to recognized writers and painters and architects, and we ask, "Can I write or paint or build?"—when all the time no one so well as ourselves knows whether we can write or paint or build. No one in all the world, though his gifts lift him to the skies, can tell another what he can do, what potentialities are there, what seed lies deep buried.

We are each like a bowl of water in which a lump of alum has been dissolved: the crystals float about unseen until a string is let down into them, when all the little particles begin to form around it, visualizing a thing of ordered beauty. So do our lives become when a string is let down into them about which our unseen gifts may form and cluster.

Youth gets this keenly; it is so much nearer the Source. Alone the boy dreams his dream, and he sees his life coursing through it. It all seems so very simple, so feasible, so joyous.

Then he appears among his elders, and they have another plan, the outcome of their dreaming. They confuse and bewilder him: his dreams get mixed with theirs; his vision clouds; he begins to yield, to conform, to compromise. Veil upon veil falls over his eyes—he loses his vision. Oh, a bitter residue remains with which the world often has to reckon in far later years.

The old idea of "making" a certain thing out of a child is based wholly on the material conception of his being just so much stuff, like a piece of silk, out of which one might make a dress, an umbrella, underwear, or window hangings. It takes into account no spiritual heritage, no divine right. The father wanted to be a lawyer, was disappointed, so makes a lawyer of his son and makes him miserable for life. The mother wanted to be a musician, was disappointed, so makes a musician of her daughter. This can never be done successfully. The water goes over the wheel but once, and when it's gone, it's gone for ever. You had your opportunity—or maybe you didn't—well, it's all one now. Let it go, or catch up with it yourself, as best you can; but this new little life, this fresh little handful straight from God with His message imbedded in its soul—be careful how you confuse that message, how you stamp it out and

plant one of your own. . . . It's a pretty big responsibility and it's an awkward thing to have a marred life on your hands.

A caller said to a little boy whose delight it was to play physician, "Will you be a doctor when you grow up, Billy?" And Billy with heavy reproof answered, "I am a doctor."

Well, Billy was right. The child is the thing the man becomes, if the man becomes the thing he truly is. There is no way suddenly to become *via* the sheepskin route a physician, lawyer, or teacher: the spirit inside is physician, lawyer, teacher from the moment the little life emerges from its cocoon. The very most the college can do, when it does its utmost best, is to develop what is already there, placed there by the authority of One higher than any president of any faculty on earth. The worst sin to its name is the attempt to graft something on that doesn't belong.

A lubberly Dutch boy had long hoed my garden: a stoop-shouldered boy, and as I supposed dull drudgery and clumsy futility all the way through. But he stopped to bid me good-bye the other night, and his back was straight, his head up, and his eyes shining as with supernal glory. I shall never forget the shining of his eyes; it was as a window opened on a naked soul.

It had all been arranged, it seemed—he was to go away to school!

A stodgy-minded person said to a young art student who had been bubbling over with enthusiastic prophecies as to what she would do some day, "I can't see any such gift in you." Back flashed the youthful retort, "It isn't important that you should—only that I do." And she was just about right, even if a bit impertinent.

I always laugh when I think of Agnes, the child of long lines of professorial people, early slated for more of the same thing. But Agnes hated Greek, loathed Latin, and as for higher mathematics, she simply wasn't there at all. She failed in school after school, was humiliated, depressed, unhappy, until some brilliant genius in the family asked, "Well, Agnes, what do you want to do?" Quoth Agnes, "I want to cook." Poor child, no one ever had cooked in her family, and she may have suffered. Anyway, Agnes wanted to cook, and when her stunned parents came to, and discovered that she could learn it in school, from books, and get a diploma for doing so, their respect developed sufficient vitality to permit their entering her on a course in Household Arts. And if you want to see Agnes to-day, you'll have to call at one of the foremost tea-rooms of the

country, where she is responsible for the sane and wholesome feeding of hundreds daily and is about the sanest, most wholesome person you'll meet in a long march.

A driving type of mother told me that she had decided to make a stenographer of her daughter, as she could be prepared quickly and stenographers were always in demand. I turned to the girl, tender, sensitive, already drooping under the mother's dominance like a young plant under too much sun, and I asked, "Do you want to be a stenographer?" "Oh, if I could choose," she said, brightening, "I'd be a kindergartner, or just anything that had to do with kiddies." Well, I wish you could see the lovely nursery she conducts for boarding babies, with kiddy coops all over the great old lawn, and cunning little tots toddling here and there in the safety of the soft turf. It's been a wonderful success: only, one of the dearest of the babies had lost its mother, and the helpless young father can't see any way at all but that the little "nursery maid" shall permanently undertake its care and incidentally his own.

Another girl, all sociability and human friendliness, loving to help other people with little problems, was being railroaded into school teaching because the pay was sure and the hours

short, leaving plenty of time for outside pleasures —as if any amount of sure pay could purchase any pleasure comparable to the satisfaction of being congenially employed. Well, she saw her mistake in time and opened, instead, a tiny shop in her neighbourhood for notions and embroidery, added house aprons and baby clothes, kept on adding as demand suggested, until she had a thriving shopping and advisory centre to which her whole end of town flocked.

We cannot afford to divide ourselves into two compartments, one for work and one for pleasure. Our work must be our pleasure. The quality we put into our work is too sensitively affected by our attitude toward it, and the reaction on ourselves is too intense for such a division to be other than highly injurious to both. We must do the work that is a pleasure to do, the work that though it wear us to the bone, provides a joyous wearing.

And no matter how dimly marked our gift, or how humble its first employment, if we work from it as a starting point, we will soon have enough development to give us song. For when we traffic in the stream of our own potentialities, every move of our lives sends power to that traffic. A true dealer in scrap iron who walks

abroad over the country will see a rusty old wheel in the field, an abandoned rake in a meadow; a true dealer in music will catch the liquid notes of a lark, the soft swishing of water against a river bank; a true dealer in art will revel in the shades of grasses, the deep purples of massed tree trunks. When we traffic in our own we steadily receive contributions of more of the same thing from our common day, from every move of our common lives. All nature conspires to enrich us. But when we traffic in another's stream, what contribution does the common day make? Bored to death, you are dealing in scrap iron because junk men have become millionaires, but will you become a millionaire? Not you! Freed from the shop, do you see scrap iron everywhere? Indeed no, you've a soul above scrap iron, you fervently breathe, and you're off after butterflies. You've taken up music because the family urged it, but off in the country do you revel in a lark's notes? Not a bit of it! You're engrossed in a new barn and wondering about the rounding roof. You've cold-bloodedly decided to become an artist, as artists run in your blood and it's expected, but freed from the studio, do you see colour everywhere? You do not! You see, instead, what fine truck

gardening opportunities are in that mucky bottom land, if only the family wouldn't have a fit over a truck gardener in its midst.

Nature marks us clearly for our ends. The bee sips the honey from the flower cup; there's beauty in the cup, pollen, fragrance—but the bee is after the honey. You bend over the cup for its fragrance, another for its beauty, another finds healing in it. Each finds his own, and makes his contribution to life in proportion as he sticks to his own.

One of the biggest misconceptions in our rather uncivilized world is that any one order of work is more to be respected than another, as an engine's "whistle" might look with condescension on the rivets that hold its mechanism together. We especially respect what we call brain work, but all work is brain work whichever servants of the brain execute it—hands or feet or voice or eyes or ears. The only work which is not brain work is that slip-shod product of kitchen or desk executed when the brain is not on the job, and this is the only work on earth which cannot be respected. Elevation—what we call success—never comes spontaneously; it is the result of quality put into work all down the line, quality put into a work one loves. Most notable editors were printers' devils and loved the smell of

printers' ink. Most notable mothers worshipped their dollies, as little girls, and had infinite patience in dressing and undressing them, putting them to sleep, and taking them for an airing. That railway president you hold as a model before your little son was an oiler only yesterday, and as good an oiler as he is a president. That head of a great school you so admire first taught in remote country districts. Never forget that this is America, and America ever rewards the true children of her democracy who step out fearlessly in the direction they would go.

If, then, you love dietetics, start—if necessary—in your own kitchen; if a classroom, start in the most available school; if babies, promote a nursery; if languages, begin in night classes—and learn from foreigners in your vicinity while you learn from books. If you are one of the fortunate who are not financially handicapped, take your gift and go with it to the best centre for its development: key your life to it. The least—the very least—start in your own direction is a thousand times more hopeful for your future development and happiness than the biggest sort of start in another. There is always a way to connect your tastes and aspirations with the needs of the world if you are brave enough to accept the way when you find it. Men would

not have been given a craving to find the poles had there been no poles. Long ago we laughed at Darius Green and his flying machine, but Darius was not so green as we. God makes no mistakes. Every gift placed in a mortal has its niche for expression in the world, just as in the children's cut-up games there is a place for the tiniest piece. A willingness to do the unusual may sometimes be required—something out of the family line—but are we Hindus, to lose caste by reason of our calling?

And neither should a life work be conceived only in terms of a specific money-making vocation. Money-making is not the need of all, but a life work is. We must each have a life work that will round into expression our own special gift, that will help us most steadily to become what is in us to be, that will move us ahead most steadily into our own proper future. And it matters not a picayune whether this future is that of an artist, a domestic-natured homemaker, a cook, or a college president. All that matters is that it is our future, and not the future of someone else, not the future another thought proper for us. Women have all too often been pushed by convention and circumstance into wifehood and motherhood when their very souls yearned for other callings. Whenever you hear

a descanting mother go on at length about the sacrifices she has made for her children, she is very likely one of these unfortunates who has been pushed into another's future. The truth probably is that she never met her children's happiness-needs wisely in her whole domestic experience; that she has steadily gone against her own grain in being domestic at all, to say nothing of the grain of her family. This word "sacrifice" is the greatest telltale we have regarding misplaced lives. For it can be no sacrifice to give yourself for the thing that is your true work, be it child or picture or poem.

What do you want to do with yourself, anyway, you who talk of sacrifice? Preserve yourself? Mummify yourself? Embalm yourself? That is not living. Living is spending. Living is giving. Living is projecting yourself into your work, into the thing that is yours to do. When you spend yourself on your natural work —in the home or in the larger world—that is you extended, that is you going right on into expression, into future. That is not being sacrificed; that is being resurrected. The only real "sacrifice" is the sacrifice of a gift, through failure to know yourself and act on the knowledge. In which case there are two sacrifices—the gift and the work actually in your hands, the work

usurped. Children pay sometimes huge penalties for a mother in the wrong calling, and business pays huge penalties for employing potential mothers to tend its files. Each in his own proper sphere, and we have no penalty, no "sacrifice."

I have never believed Christ felt himself sacrificed in his death. He was spent for the thing he stood for, and if He felt that his death on the cross would establish the truth He came to bring, then it was no sacrifice to Him. Think how Christ's life was so merged into His work that we know almost nothing of Him outside it. Think how Shakespeare was so lost in his plays that we scarcely know a Shakespeare outside them. This is the ideal. This is the way to look upon a life work, be it the raising of children, the making of money, or the furthering of any of life's worthy ends. Find your own true work, and you will find your heart's own. Lose yourself in it, and you will never think of sacrifices in its connection.

We each have our special devotions in every direction. Note how one will all but smother in the shut-inness of mountains, while another will bloom like a rose. There are those who cannot endure the vast unbrokenness of the desert, while to others, how it calls for ever! Some love a dog, some a cat: some men, among stock

breeders, are for Holsteins, others for Ayrshires, for no particular reason. And when it comes to our human relationships, how rich is our day when we meet one who is by nature akin! How kindling the contact! How we are aroused, stimulated, when we find our own, scattered like gold in ore, everywhere through life. Do not for a moment put all these predilections of ours down to mere whim. They are all for purpose. Through them old Dame Nature gets her earth explored and inhabited to the uttermost ends, gets all her numerous family looked after, gets all our abilities fertilized. When we reach a point where we see purpose in everything and begin to work in harmony with that purpose—not against it—we shall begin to achieve the proper fulfilment of our lives.

If, then, we are to give back to the world the full fruitage of our natures, we must enrich every avenue of our lives, steadily, with more of its own kind. We must call our own to us, for it is the law. Call our own loudly, as our children. Call our work, our play, our friends, our environment. And when we do this, when we at last begin to enter upon our own true heritage—how all the devotees of our calling through all time hold out their hands to us! How all the aids rush to us! How all the forces in the Universe

are with us! We become as a runner who has entered upon a path that leads on to the full sun of his desires. We become as a straw in a stream caught up by all the other straws going that way, by the force of the full current going that way, by the winds that blow that way. What an entering upon a timeless life it is! What a following on after a beautiful weaving from a loom that winds on into eternity! Can we afford to let others miss it, those young runners just starting? Can we afford to leave the statue buried in the stone?

IV

THE MUSIC UNDER THE NOISE

"THERE can't be a God!" So my friend wound up—she had been rehearsing to me in my city studio a fresh batch of woes. "There can't be! His heart would break, looking on! He couldn't endure it, through the ages!"

Her face was distorted, her hands shaking, her whole being overwrought—and futile—from her fixed contemplation of wrongs, from her pressing need to straighten them all out, to straighten the whole world out. And I had no reply; the right word didn't come.

But when she had gone, and I sat alone in my cluttered studio where the world jangled noisily at my windows, where my friend's querulous complaints and tragic doubts had further ruffled the atmosphere, the scene changed, and I looked upon another picture that I know well: far-flung acres in the Umatilla country, young wheat lifting golden green to a blue sky, larks rising rapturously on the winy air, pouring out their liquid notes in the proclamation, "It is

spring! It is spring! It is spring!" . . . On the highest rise of land a small church: it is Sunday morning, and the remnants of an Indian tribe that in the long ago cruelly massacred the brave missionaries who had trekked across a continent to teach them of God—the remnants of this tribe, living together in peace and industry and good will toward all living creatures, are gathered there to worship. One of their number is speaking—a powerfully built Indian, noted as an athlete, but he speaks gently, without gesture or aggression, and in his eyes is the look of one who dwells much in the still places, and in his words is inspiration. The dusky hearers listen, without turning a head, without stirring in their seats. Then out through the windows pour the vibrant voices of young Indians in the old hymn, "More of His grace to others show." They sing it with fulness and beauty. The music billows across the fields where the wind breathes low through the young wheat, making an accompaniment—and a promise . . . And it came to me strongly, out of the peace and quiet which the memory evoked: God saw the massacre, but He sees this, too. And the horrors of the massacre were but of the body, and so for only a day, but this is of the soul, and so for ever. And that is why there can

be a God, and He can look on through the ages and not be broken-hearted, and that is why we should not wreck ourselves by concentrated contemplation of the cruel, stupid, and wrong things, but should keep ourselves balanced and sane by at least equal contemplation of the wise, intelligent, and right things.

We do not need to go to far-off plateaus under Western skies to hear God's everlasting music, for it is going on all about us, wherever we are, ceaselessly. A lark sings in every lane, only we have got so in the habit of heralding the clangours and leaving the music unacclaimed that we are inclined to lose sight of the music altogether. The morning paper screams at us of the murder of a little child in our town right under our noses, and we join in with the general furore and demand, "What is the world coming to!" But the paper failed to mention with equal conspicuousness the fact that Tom Jones and his wife—also in our town—have recently adopted a third abandoned baby, making for each of these new little lives just arrived on the earth and with no place to go, a welcome as for a prince of the house of royalty. We read of a case of kidnapping that fairly curdles our blood, and we loudly declare that the world grows worse and worse, but nothing is said in the same sheet

of the kindness of Mary Smith, who opened her small apartment to a homeless old lady, installing her as the true mother of her home. We read in huge scareheads that two boys have burglarized a house in our very neighbourhood, and we demand, "Where is the hope of the future, with the youth of the land given over to lawlessness?" But we overlooked an obscure notice tucked down on an inside page to the effect that five hundred boys of high-school age were meeting in conference to discuss the application of Christian ideals to everyday living. A woman sighed and groaned: "Dear, dear, the awful books appearing nowadays! No wonder our girls run wild!" Losing sight entirely of the fact that never before in the history of the world was so much excellent reading matter in reach of such a large proportion of humanity. All over the country have swept the moanings of people of culture because of the falling off of the spoken play, the absorption in "movies" of so large a part of the playgoing public; but even while the moanings filled the air, there began to arise play-acting groups everywhere, in schools, clubs, society, and labour circles: a movement that will do more for sound play-development, springing, as it should, out of the people themselves, than have all the years of mere professional per-

formances with their many—and often hideous —road companies. . . . It is difficult, when close to a thing, to see the friendly swing of the event; difficult to take our eyes off the departing and welcome the coming; difficult to live without vision.

In my home town, recently, a jurist died, and all the town bowed its head in grief and said, "We shall not see his like again." We found—as his body lay in state—that he had been from his youth up a friend to man, a protector of the widow and orphan, an elder brother to the poor, a strong arm for the law of human right—a just man, and a great man, and a good man: a man who, though far from rich, gladly paid a one-hundred-dollar telephone bill for the privilege of quoting from the Bible to a friend in trouble on the other side of the continent. A man who as judge—when a divorce case came before him—the case of two who had in earlier years been known to him, called out: "Mary, is that you? John, is that you? Come here into my office!" And who left the bench to go into his inner office alone with these two—the three to come out a few minutes later all wiping their eyes, the case dismissed and the records ordered cleared. And yet all through the fair days that he lived, doing steadily these kind, wise, sensible deeds, the

inspired deeds of the good man who sees life whole, his neighbours were looking far afield and sighing, "If we only had great men in public life as once we had!"

We need distance on things—perspective.

A great man sat in a suburban car beside me going to work, a dinner pail in his lap. Only by accident did I learn that he was a great man, though I had suspected it from a peculiar look in his eyes when he was off guard, as of one enduring to the uttermost and yet with a look of courage, always, for the world. An architect with an invalid wife, he had been stricken with a form of paralysis that crippled his hands. But he didn't want her to know he could no longer guide his pencils through his beautiful drawings, so he invented the fiction that he wanted to do night work, so he could spend more of his days with her; gave up his beautiful offices and took a watchman's job, where he paced drearily through long, lonely hours, that she who had grieved so much might not be further grieved by the loss of his art. But casual onlookers only shrugged with, "a dull man leading a dull life."

"Another drab little town," said my fellow passenger, with a disparaging shrug, and as the train slowed down, buried himself in his magazine to close out the uninteresting view—but it

so happened that I could have told him of great lives nurtured there, of a great editor who lived to sway events in the larger world, whose boyhood was spent under that little town's spreading oaks, whose schooling was gained at its small academy, whose young manhood ripened into thoughtfulness and the power to give a real service to the world, right there where the train went through. And out of the "drabness" that was all that the traveller had seen, that other had carried away memories of sunny skies, rustling tree boughs, singing birds, murmuring waters, a delectable swimming hole, kindly and generous human relationships, romance—why, all the richness he later gave to the larger world was drawn off as by a spigot from that "drab" little town. And he was only one.

My mind moves on to another, who stayed. Calamities had come to her, the recital of which would sound like a chapter from a misanthrope's diary—deaths, money losses, until, past middle age, she faced the need to earn her own living and no reason to live. She said, "I will work myself to death." This seemed to her a not dishonourable way out of life. To this end she acquired every possible living thing that would need care—cows, chickens, a cat, a dog, a bird, a parrot. She rose early each morning to attend

to them, and their needs filled her day. Storms came—she must bed down her cows with fresh hay; calves came, new little chickens, puppies, kittens; the parrot vociferously demanded a cracker, the bird twittered for fresh water. She grew steadily healthier and stronger; she found she could not work herself to death, and at last she no longer wanted to die. Her interest extended to people. She had many books, and many friends sent her steadily the new ones. She spread the gospel of good reading; she made her large, rambling, old-fashioned house the reading centre for the whole town. People dropped in freely—even travellers found the place, when an hour must be lost between trains —and they never afterward called it lost. A day with her was like a day escaped out of Paradise, so active were her sympathies, so instant was her understanding, so quick her response, so ready her wit—a truly sighted person. But what was there to the shallow gaze of the passer-by but a worn old house that shivered in the winter wind, in and out of which a middle-aged woman went—alone? No, it is not the little town that is drab; it is ourselves who look out of drab eyes. Nothing is drab but to the colour-blind; nothing mute but to the tone-deaf.

We see a tired young woman climbing city

stairs to her room at the close of a hard day in office or factory, and we think there is nothing for her; all is dreariness. But on the one window's sill a bird alights, and she throws it crumbs, and a lovely radiance glows within her. Another gathers up an alley cat, all smudged and neglected, and bathes it and feeds it and wins it to beauty and soft playfulness—and wins the deep-lying beauty of her own soul from drought. The most perfect expression of new life in spring green I ever saw was a window-box filled with sprouting grapefruit. A little girl had gathered up the seed thrown out from a restaurant and planted them there, and had joyously watched the pure, young colour come. Another child was radiant over tiny piles of sand carried in pieces of broken glass from a new building to her own doorstep, and there she played, pretending she had an entire sandpile, life warm and glowing in her under the magic of make-believe. Everywhere special days are celebrated, Easter, the Fourth of July, Christmas, birthdays, great events—but it is not merely the traditional holiday that we are celebrating. It is that something, deep within ourselves, that demands that the music of life shall have its day in the midst of so much that is merely noisy.

We become discouraged with one another, we proclaim the obliviousness of man to the deeper, spiritual side of living, and it is true that we do chatter endlessly of trivial things, retailing the latest gossip in a sort of "News, news, who's got the news," game for adults that suggests the shallowest of mental development. But this chatter is not a true gauge of our real selves, for all the while it is going on another life is going on deep down inside, a life of which we allow none to have cognizance. We live intensely—in there; we question life's meaning—in there; we recognize our spiritual selves—in there; we sense the beauty of being and the promise of eternity—in there: but let us meet one of our kind, and instantly, like a sensitive plant, we close off this inner, this permanent *us*, and offer him only the outer husk. We express ourselves in the old hymn as being eager, in that life to come, to "know as we are known"—and then we do all in our power to keep from knowing—or being known—in the life we are now in. This gives rise to doubt in the mind of the skeptic, the unimaginative observer. He knows he is serious-minded, but he questions whether we ever really are. Well, he needn't question—we are.

We fix our minds too intently on the obvious,

failing to go farther. We are absorbed in our petty round, failing to see of what it is a part. It is as though we stood off and observed the whirling of the planets, but became concerned only with the meteors tossed through the celestial spaces. It's as though we watched a turning wheel polishing a piece of glass, and became concerned only with the particles of emery thrown off in waste. But the Creator does not stop the universe because of a bit of iron and stone dashed into a farmer's potato patch: the mechanic does not stop his wheel because of wasted emery. And so it is with Life. The Great Plan rolls grandly on like an anthem sung by master musicians. The seasons bring us tears and tumults, it is true, but they unfailingly bring their gifts of nurturing, of growing, of harvest, of rest. The hours roll over us in what we speak of as a day, with slippings and stumblings on our part, but each day brings unfailingly its awakening, its high noon, its fulfillment, and its repose. New little lives come into being, and we are hectic with joy or tense with uneasiness, adopting this method, discarding that; but quite as if we were not, life steadily unfolds the tiny baby, like a flower, petal by petal. Death encompasses one to whom we are accustomed, and our hearts bleed, and we hold fast

to all things that were his, and seeking to hold him to us, we sink all that is left to us of him in six feet of earth, hedge it in with a headstone and a footstone, and on the headstone inscribe "Here lies—— . . ." But unmindful of our childish proclamation, the sun shines warmly on the bit of earth, the dews fall gently, the breezes play over it, till through vine and leaf and twig and flower, and singing birds and winging insects, all that we would limit to the narrow tomb is drawn back once more into part and parcel with the great universal flow of life itself. Everywhere we look we see God's plan operating, as regardless of us as moves a resistless undertow beneath the fret of surface waters. Everywhere, if we will but listen, "Step aside," says old Nature. "I'll take hold here." And we step aside, and Nature sweeps on with her plan, sweeping us on with her, if we catch her keynote—or else to one side, in the rubbish heap of the impermanent.

There is comfort in this—tremendous comfort. Something is fixed, something is stable; only we are uncertain. And only we, of all creation, give place and space to the impermanent. Everywhere Perfection is trying to break through, and everywhere we push Perfection back. Look at the shining in the eyes of a

young man as he gazes on his beloved, in the eyes of a true mother as she gazes upon her baby. Each is gazing on a dream of Perfection. Look at the beauty in flowers, kittens, lambs at play —all representing Perfection, each a full development of its kind. Think of a folksong, natural music—natural as the song of a lark—*right* as the music of the spheres, a thing perfected. All perfected things express harmony, rhythm, music. There are no harsh sounds in nature: recall the music of falling waters, of swaying tree boughs, of growing corn, of buzzing insects —all busy, busy, busy—no man is so busy as are the least of the perfected things below man. No stagnation is there, no deadness; all is activity, all is fulfilment, and all is music. Only God's undeveloped creatures, unfinished, unperfected—only we, in our strivings, breaking our moulds—give out harsh sounds.

We must believe, then, that when we, too, are finally perfected, we, too, will make only harmony in the world. Think how it is with us now when we are able to create some one perfect thing—a happy atmosphere so that people love to be near us, a song, a picture, a cake, trust in the heart of a dog, love in the heart of a fellow being, confidence in a tiny child—when we are able to seize the right thread in a tangle and

draw out the hard knot—think how it is with us then! What a sense of pure joy floods us! What harmony comes into us! What beauty! What rhythm! And then go on with it and imagine what all life will be when that blissful time comes when all that we do will be *right;* when the laws of life that make the whole vast scheme sublime are understood and operate within each of us as unfailingly as they now do in perfected nature. Then will the noise of living be stilled, the clamour and clangour cease, and music only be heard—music of exultation, as from a lark's throat; of achievement, as in growing grain . . .

Then why become discouraged? Man is finding his place on the earth, and it's a noisy process —but give him time. It's just possible that the crudeness will not be so shoutingly apparent when we get distance on it. It is just possible that it will sink back in the picture as we get farther away. It is just possible that the music of even this day, that we are rather given to deploring, will carry farther than the noise. What do we think of when we remember the American Revolution, with its hard facts of graft and self-seeking, but the faith and steadfastness of Washington? What do we recall of the Civil War, with its bitterness and greed, but the

vision and integrity of Lincoln? What will stay with men in ages to come of the great World War, with its hideous agonies, but the birth on earth of peace among nations?

Remembering these things, suppose we should try the experiment of changing the emphasis. Isn't it wholly possible that emphasis on the permanent things, the things that endure for ever, on the right, and the strong, and the true of our world, our nation, our state, our town, our families, and our homes, would set up a wholesome trend that way? Isn't it wholly possible that we vastly increase the chaos we deplore, when we allow it to become as a lodestone, dragging us ever down to its own destructive level? Nature tends to restore—water purifies itself every few miles—time heals—and a lark sings on your very doorstep. Listen for it!

V

GOLDEN SORROW

IT WAS one of those conversations that develop sometimes in a group of women apparently so far removed from sorrow that they can discuss it. We were picnicking in Oregon—lunch spread on a green knoll—and now sat about in languid ease under the trees, idly talking, when the young daughter of one of the group dashed by on her spirited horse, her brother after her—the two making a vivid picture. Every one smiled admiringly as their eyes followed the riders.

"I just don't see how people can stand to lose their children!" exclaimed one, her gaze coming back to the group.

"It would be the deepest sorrow possible," agreed another.

"No, not the deepest," said the mother of the young riders.

The others turned to her in astonishment, for she was not only a devoted mother, but of them all, perhaps, the happiest in her devotions—a robust woman, robust in her joy in her family.

"It would be terrible, but not so bad as to lose one's husband. Oh, I couldn't live if I lost Tom!"

No one could agree with her: to lose one's husband would be hard—but oh, to lose a child! Lively debate followed. The mother of the riders stood her ground.

"But he was with you from the beginning," she urged. "He was ahead of the children. They would always have to come after."

But they could not see it. I think they even felt a little critical of Marian for such doctrine.

A few months, and she had lost them all: husband, son, daughter . . . I dreaded seeing her, but my dark dread broke into glad surprise, for she came to meet me with shining in her eyes.

"They are not gone!" she cried. "They are with me—more with me than ever!"

This was the revelation that Death had brought her—that they lived! That shuddering horror, "What if I should lose them!" stilled in the golden assurance, "I can't lose them!" Their spiritual reality surging in upon her so vividly that she was as one exalted. . . . And I found her friends were again feeling a little critical of her, saying to one another that

it would be a pity if poor Marian should allow grief to make her "queer."

Of all the things that come to us, Death brings the greatest gift when it brings this living realization. We theorize about the future—before; we say, "We believe" so and so—before; we "accept" certain faiths, or we reject them—before; some of us become cynical in our wandering among the shallows of life; declare that we die as the animals die, and that's the last of us; or we say the scientists find no proof and—we're with the scientists; or we pride ourselves on our good sportsmanship—we'll meet Death as we meet Life, without flinching, we say, like a good sport; but deep down inside there's the shadow of the haunt—what if it should come to this one—or this one—or this one——

Then Death comes and takes one whose life is bound up in our own, and lo! instead of black despair, we are lifted up, glorified, exalted! We feel his ascension and with him ascend! We *know.* All at once we *know.*

How do we know? What is it that warms and comforts when we are drawn within dear arms, held to a dear breast? Is it merely the strength of the arms? The softness of the breast? Isn't it that an indefinable something tells us here is rest, here is love, here is our own?

Then neither can we probe and analyse the goldenness of the comfort that comes when we are lifted in the great ascension: we only *know*.

Earth tells us in a thousand ways that nothing in our world goes into lasting sleep. It is spring, that time of universal resurrection: tight, hard little twists of red and yellow on the trees tell us that new leaf buds are here; the twists begin to unroll, the red and yellow fade into pale green, then a deeper green, then a husky summer green that gives protection to bud and blossom, fruit and seed. As autumn approaches the summer green begins to disappear, red and yellow to creep again into leaf edges, on down into the full leaf—life going out exactly as it came in; stems let go, leaves fall back to earth, go into soil, into nurture, to be drawn again into the tree's life blood, to return with another spring in more leaves, to protect more blossoms, more fruit, more seed . . . over and over . . . over and over . . . over and over . . .

Watch grain: there's a birth—a little sprig as tender as a new-born baby; it pushes upward, gets to be a little more of a plan, comes into laughing, robust youth, full of joy, waving, tossing its head; next it takes on real dignity—youth going into manhood—sends up a stem, grain begins to form; as it ripens the sap goes out of

the stalk—it's only straw now; the straw goes back to earth, the grain into new life . . . over and over . . . over and over . . . over and over . . .

Or go into a forest where fires have laid low stark, black boles, vast areas of them, an army fallen as it stood, a cruelty to the eye, a wickedness of life. You stop your car on the road that leads into the pitchy inferno. You remember how only last year you drove through that magnificent forest—and now here it lies in ruins, gone in a brief season. There are not exclamations enough! There are not denunciations enough! But cease your exclaiming and denouncing! There is a lesson here for you if you will but stop your noise. Get out of your car, go in among the charred ruins—and what do you see? Already, before the smoke has died away, new life is stirring—fireweed everywhere is sending up handsome spikes of colour. Look, even closer: see the tracks of insects, tiny bills boring, helping on the work of sending the old trees back to soil, where they will in time nurture more life, send forth more growth . . . over and over . . . over and over . . . over and over . . .

That grave—long before the swiftest love can place its tribute in marble or bronze, the grasses

will have covered it, the blossoms will have come. I heard a very old gentleman lamenting in Trinity churchyard, New York City, because already, in less than a century, the tombstones of his ancestors were crumbling. Could nothing be found more permanent than marble or bronze? But all about him, could he only have opened the eyes of his soul, he would have seen that more permanent thing—that only permanent thing—eternal life in eternal change.

Then leave that grave to Mother Earth: she will minister to it; she will set grasses to growing and flowers to blooming; she will call to it the birds and the bees and the butterflies. Its final care is her task: you can do nothing for it so gracious or so beautiful as she will do. Turn from that narrow couch—Mother Earth is now the nurse—turn to the living; turn to the spirit that never dies; follow on in the ascension.

There was a war mother I knew, who, like thousands of others, lost her only son. It seemed that there was no comfort to be found for the poor woman. Friends tried many things without success till finally one asked "Wasn't there some one thing that she loved specially to do for him, or that he loved specially to have her do? Some one thing that brought intimacy of spirit between them?"

Yes—one remembered there was. She used to love to gather the first fruits from her orchard and make them into jelly, taking unusual pride in having it tender, quivering, and keeping the tint delicate, like something young, just captured out of life; an artist about it. And the boy—well, the boy would come in from work or play, and he would lift a glass very carefully and turn it about in the sunlight. "Gee, but that's pretty!" he would say, being something of an artist, too. Then his mother would give him one small glass to "sample"—for his judgment must be on it—with hot biscuit for his lunch—just that one glass before it was all put away for winter. It was a special little rite between them.

"Then," said a wise one, "let us get her to making jelly, for the currants are ripe."

"Oh, but that will bring it all back!" another feared.

"But that is what we want—to bring her boy back. He's gone, some way; we must bring him back."

It wasn't easy. But at last, through one pretext and another—the fruit was spoiling—we got her to making jelly. She went at it grimly, poor soul, but determinedly; she would save the fruit. And so she crushed and strained and weighed and

measured, all with a stony face, doing her duty When the liquid was in the little glasses in the sunlight, she turned to the bleaker task of washing pans and kettles.

Then someone came in, lifted a glass: "It's beautiful—like rubies!" she said.

And the poor mother, turning, caught the ruby light, the piercing beauty, and it all came back. She burst into weeping. "It's the way my boy always liked it," she cried, rocking in agony. "Oh, I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

"And it's the way he still likes it," said the friend, continuing to hold the glass to the light, turning it about, letting the sun make jewel tints in it.

"But he isn't here to sample it for Mother!"

"But he is here! He's in the beauty, the purity, the perfection of it! He's telling you there are thousands of other boys—to 'sample' it for Mother!"

She came to feel his presence at last, and there came comfort for her in making her jellies for the boys in the trenches, comfort in once more lifting her "first fruits" to the sunlight, seeing the sparkle, saying, "My boy would like that." Comfort in doing it—in his name—for other boys. Later on, comfort in doing it for those in hospital wards, in sick rooms, in children's

homes, in old people's retreats. She came to feel her boy's presence as she worked, to feel his youth and gaiety in the sparkling little glasses. It was a beautiful ascension, a goldenness shining in upon her life, shining out from her life over other lives—the circuit over and over . . . over and over . . . over and over . . .

I was once at a resort in the Catskills when a recently bereaved family came for easement. The daughter whom they had lost had been a harpist, and the mother especially had loved the young girl's music. An older daughter and the father were tender in their care of this grief-stricken mother, but not always wise. A young harpist came to play for the guests' pleasure, and hearing about it, the elder daughter rushed frantically to the musician and besought her not to uncover the harp till she could get her mother back to her room, with doors and transoms closed. She was sure the music would break her mother's heart. . . . But happily, sometimes, walls are thin in summer resorts, and the strains from the harp floated up and into the room where the poor mother sat bowed in the blackness of grief. She heard, lifted her head, rose to her feet. The elder daughter, fearful, rushed to her, attempted to push her back into her chair, while the father brought cushions and

smelling salts. But the mother thrust them away from her—she must hear, hear . . . She opened the door, went down the hall, down the stairs, found a sheltered seat, and sat there drinking in the music—the very music that her child had loved and played—sat drinking it in till she was filled with the beauty in her child's spirit, till the air was filled with goldenness as from the goldenness of her child's heart.

Away went her vapours, away her seclusion, away cushions and smelling salts: the young harpist was having a bitter struggle to go on with her music, playing in hotels to pay expenses. This mother gave her material assistance; through her met other young harpists, helped them—helped many—until, for that one lost maker of sweet music on the earth, there were many, and a mother's empty heart was filled to overflowing. Sorrow still, but a golden sorrow, a sorrow through which she ascended, through which there were many ascensions.

It is good for us to cry, to reach out our arms in yearning, to ache in our hearts with the ache of common humanity through the ages. It is good for us to suffer in this way: our spirits ripen, our hearts are made tender, our deepest well-springs are freed of débris, and a mellowness comes that never comes from happier mo-

ments. It is good for us to suffer our way into the goldenness of sorrow.

To a boy rarely beautiful in face and nature, with vast material wealth awaiting him, came Death. His mother, rousing out of the blackness of despair, dedicated all that she had meant for her boy—in his name—to other boys just entering manhood, and Leland Stanford, Jr., University was born—born out of a golden sorrow, born out of a beautiful ascension.

Only recently many people were stunned into silent awe by news of the heroic act of a plain, everyday, elderly woman of whom the world had never previously heard. Entrapped in an automobile wreck in a deep cañon, without food or water, without means or hope of escape—the only one alive in the party save a child—she finally took her penknife and opened the veins in her breast to give the child nourishment; died that the child might live. A great sorrow to her family, but a golden sorrow . . . a great ascension . . . ascensions all over the country—people everywhere moved, softened, made tender—wanting to do something about it, erect a monument, endow a bed—something—something . . .

Thus is beauty increased on the earth—by

the release of beauty into the Eternal. "And I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men to me." There's a great lifting up—and thousands are drawn. The earth-sheath slips away, and the spirit is freed into light, into goldenness, into For ever: our gaze following after, we reflect some of the glory.

The monuments of a country help us to read its great ascensions: someone goes out heroically —through a deed of heroism, or from a notably beautiful life—and everything in us that has kinship with that heroism or that beauty arouses from latency into activity—and we erect a monument.

But this monument tells those who look on, not alone of the worth that is gone, but of the worth still on earth. Go stand by a monument anywhere, in any town. You'll find one, generally, in the public square—maybe a drinking fountain, maybe a group piece, maybe a "doughboy," maybe a granite slab, or a monolith with names cut in—maybe it is even ugly in itself, as monuments often are—but stand there and picture to yourself all that it means, how this one off on a lonely farm was moved to give, and this one selling ribbons in some crowded store, and this one bending wearily over office files,

and this teacher, and this housekeeper, and this little child—all, all sharing in the great ascension.

Maybe the "monument" has taken the form of an endowed bed, a hospital, a scholarship, a library, a home for unfortunates: whatever the form, the ascension is there. There may have been sorrow—but it was golden sorrow.

In the past it was the convention to make a vast gloom of Death. Almost universal were the heavy crêpe, the waxen flowers, the hushed voice, the drooped head, the bleak and dreary atmosphere, shutting off all that the life that had gone meant—all its promise, all its beginnings, all that it stood for—in a grave as narrow as we give to the body. Tiny garments were laid away in lavender to be wept over through the years; diaries and journals and other writings were hidden away or destroyed; death chambers were closed to remain undisturbed through the dusts of time, last-used articles held sacred from human touch—everything ended, sealed, and done for. Slowly, slowly, we come out of all this. Slowly we learn that the one way to keep our own for ever with us is to lift into the aura of his spiritual permanence.

The change brings sadness: this must be. All change brings a touch of sadness. That is

why we cannot look on a rose a-tilt on its swaying stem, a baby in its dimpled roundness, a bird in the air, without a sort of clutching at our heart-strings. It's that we know, even while we look as on an arrested moment in the everturning wheel, that change must come: soon the rose will be ashes that another rose may bloom; soon the baby will become a child on the road to becoming a man, that life's round may go on; soon the bird will be gone to other climes. All change brings a sense of melancholy, as of Indian summer days. We try to hold fast to phases, we mortals, clasping them tight in our puny hands, not realizing that the only way we can keep anything is to let it go: the only way we can be immortal is to release ourselves into immortality. That dimpled baby—you would keep him a baby always, always, you say, looking out on life with affrighted eyes. Would you? Very well: your wish is granted. He remains a baby: the months go by, and there remains the same baby look in his eyes; the same baby intelligence shows in his acts; the same baby body falls lumpishly about in your arms . . . and then one day you arouse to what is happening—or not happening—to your child, and you cry out in swift agony:

"Life—Life—take him! Give him every

change, each in its turn! Let him go on in the proper round!"

And nothing on earth will ever be comparable to the joy that will flood you with the first sign in him of *change*.

Each life moves on as the stream to the sea: and as with the stream, so with the life—in the finals only the dross remains with the earth: the fineness of us—the distillation—lifts in ascension. And from this ascension there comes again to the earth, as in showers of refreshing, the aroma of all that was good in us, all that was beautiful in us, all that was true in us, for all this is the immortal in us.

Let us, then, in our sorrow, lift in ascension, knowing that the goldenness of the comfort that will come from the bosom of the Eternal will make our sorrow golden.

VI

THE GOD OF THE LONESOME HEART

I WAS alone on a California sea beach. Not a soul in sight—not a soul that I knew within hundreds of miles. The surf broke at my feet on a strip of curd-white sand. Before me a blue sea stretched off to gray infinity. Back of me cypress trees flattened and interwove their boughs in a matted roof of emerald. White gulls swayed a moment on a snowy crest, then flew up and away, their shrill screams piercing the booming made by the slapping waves.

I tramped on, crunching the hard white sand under my feet: tramped rapidly, running away from all the loneliness . . . and presently thoughts began to charge in, thoughts that escape words, charging my brain like booming waves, piercing my dulness like sea gulls' cries; thoughts that lifted as wings lift, that filled and thrilled me as beauty filled all the space about me. . . . And then in flashed this thought: If I had lived 'way back in those ancient days, days far beyond those of which we have record,

days when the loves and fears of man were being assigned god-ship—if I could have lived then and could have had a voice in affairs, I would have prayed the powers: "Oh, let the fairest god of all be the god of the lonesome heart!"

For while, humanly, we shrink from loneliness as from a plague, the greatest inpouring possible to man comes out of it—so much that never comes out of anything else; so much that we would miss altogether but for loneliness, but for getting away from the usual routine, the usual people, the usual duties. For loneliness is but a cutting adrift from our moorings and floating out to the open sea; an opportunity for finding ourselves, our *real* selves, what we are about, where we are heading during our little time on this beautiful earth.

We live so much of our lives as a part of a somewhat complicated pattern, fitting into other lives, into niches. We become accustomed to certain faces, certain foods, certain occupations. On awaking each morning, the harness is there, suspended, ready to fall upon our shoulders. Cut away the harness, and we are bewildered, lost, so much stronger has *harness* become than personality. . . . I met a woman in a charming hotel making her first and long-anticipated jaunt away from home—alone. She came

down to breakfast with worry lines on her brow. It was raining and she was sure she *had left clothes on the line*. This waking worry of so many years, when she heard rain on the roof, was going right along with her on her trip, to fill her mind and rob it of all possibility of receiving fresh impressions. . . . A retired farmer came into the lobby beaming. "Now we'll have a crop!" Still farming, still dropping grain and turning furrows. . . . A woman tourist driving through the Columbia River gorge with the most astounding semi-tropical growths on every side could see none of it, so obsessed was she with the fear that she had come away and left one small begonia out where it might freeze.

This is the first impulse that comes out of loneliness born of strange surroundings—to brood, to worry, to live back, to carry on with the old-time responsibilities. I doubt if there is a soul on earth, who, at last freed from routine and permitted to go away into new scenes, has not at some time before the new has fully taken hold, experienced a mad desire to turn and run back into that from which he has just escaped. Slip in under the old harness, feel the rub of the old collar. Almost a panicky necessity to turn and run back into accustomedness.

It takes more courage than people who haven't done it realize to cut loose and stay cut loose. A freed prisoner will return to jail and ask to be locked up; it's too lonely out in the world. A man suddenly enriched will cling to his old job —cobbling, carpentering; that fear of loneliness again. Business men who retire early—in our country—find the first few months almost unendurable and in many cases succumb early. Mothers have serious "breakdowns" when their children are up and gone. Boarding-school girls sicken from loneliness and have to be sent home. Boys in the army and the navy suffer from it as from bodily illness. Crimes grow out of it. Insane asylums receive its victims.

A woman who has lived over her allotted threescore and ten and who has been at the forefront of every move to push women into new fields exclaimed grievously: "Oh, I want the family fireside, the chatter of young and old about a long dining table! The old way was best!" . . . Said another, wistfully: "I began to dream of being a grandmother when my first daughter was born. I wanted to be a nice old granny in a cap with little children clamouring about my knee." But her daughters haven't accommodated: one is studying cancer bugs in a Paris laboratory; another is deep in Japanese

art; the third—from whom she hoped most—is in the slums of Philadelphia wiping little noses of every nationality but her own.

Old homes broken up, old niches done away with, grandmothers with no hereditary firesides to sit by, no big roomy homes where Aunt Jane and Uncle John and Cousin Jenny and all the rest can come a-visiting; the old farm sold and the old people moving into town to save Mother the work—all very well for Mother, but what about Aunt Laura who had planned to bring her knitting and stay all winter? What about Grandma who had thought it would be so dear to spend the summer under the trees with her great-grandchildren? What about the children who dreamed of going to "the farm" for their vacation?

All these changes are especially hard on the older people: they have too much time, often, to themselves—in hotels, boarding houses, rooms, apartments—and they use it too generally to think back, and dream back, and live back—and wish—and wish and wish. . . .

And the daughters: there are gaps for them, too, into which come loneliness of spirit—and brooding: the potential mother lonely for her children that are not; the woman held fast by maternal duties, looking far afield, seeing what

other women are doing out there in the big busy world, and feeling that she is the one Life has passed by—left "lonely as a cloud."

We get to thinking that loneliness is a special grief of to-day, with its breaking up of families, opening up of the whole wide world, and wanderlust, curiosity, or eagerness to know calling us here and there and everywhere. And then we remember about the war, and how it has left so many hearts bereft. But always there has been war, and always there has been that restlessness of the race for new scenes, new conquests: we only have to remember the little bands landing on lonely shores—the Pilgrim fathers and mothers, the French in Canada, the Spanish in California—leaving loneliness behind them, going on into worse loneliness. Old pioneers who crossed the plains in covered wagons tell of the ones who couldn't endure strange skies, the steady going on into ever more strangeness. They had to turn back. And of those who went on, who made homes in the new land, numbers died of grieving.

We are entering into a new land of life-habit to-day, that is all the difference, and first settlers must suffer, as they have in all time. . . . But wait: look into the fullest, most satisfied lives, both worldly and domestic, where no dis

rupting change has come; don't we still find times of deep physical, and mental, and spiritual loneliness? Can't we all remember, as little children, slipping away to some secluded spot, there to cry our very eyes out over—we knew not what? Just the ache of loneliness? Aren't we all, regardless of our special situation, merely little children, hugging some Teddy bear close to our hearts in an effort to assuage the eternal nostalgia?

What, then, can we do about it?

Face it; face it without anæsthetic of any kind. No hurrying to lose consciousness between the covers of a book, no diving wildly into letter writing, no haunting the mail box, no game of solitaire, no seeking out "someone to talk to"; just courageously face loneliness—which is all-aloneness. Turning away from all the props, crutches, busy work, time fillers, from the brooding, from the memories, and make ourselves all empty to receive whatever it has to give us, palms upward instead of downward in despair.

Then, loneliness—where is it?

Gone like the vapour of a dream. In its place, joy notes, music as "harps in the air," the arresting glory of a new thought, pictures, patterns, visioning—beauty everywhere. We find ourselves, if on an open road (and an open

road is the best place in the world to face loneliness), walking ever more rhythmically, with an ever-increasing sense of going on into restfulness of spirit. A glow comes into our faces, our eyes shine, till at length, when we return out of the big Everywhere into our own small shelter, the ache is gone, and we carry back with us only refreshment.

It's hugging loneliness to our hearts that kills —brooding over it, worrying over it, sorrowing over it, sitting alone indoors with it, letting it swamp us; instead of turning squarely about and facing it, going on in to it, getting its message.

Some of us who have learned to rely on the strength that comes out of loneliness create our periods of flight into it by way of long walks —alone—over hillsides, through stony pastures, by the sea. Oh, there is nothing in all the world so re-creating as to lie out on top of a mountain and feel the throbbing earth underneath you; unless it is to tramp along a wild coast with the ocean spreading so vast before you; or to be in the midst of the desert with space illimitable all about you: that sense of all-aloneness with the Eternal, that shutting out of everything else, that losing of all consciousness of Self. It's the biggest thing in life, for out of

it come the biggest things—poise, balance, faith, vision.

A woman I know takes her all-alone times at her kitchen window, where humming birds whir among honeysuckle vines. She utterly loses self-consciousness while watching the birds. Before she knows it, she is singing at her work, singing tremendously high, singing songs never written, words that she snatches out of space, phrases she invents without realizing what she is doing. She is freed. She lets go. There's no looking back—no holding back—no reserve. It's a soul bath out of which she comes refreshed for her labours.

A cripple from her couch watches the clouds till she loses all consciousness of herself, becomes God-conscious only, and comes back to self-consciousness as one trailing shining garments. . . . Trees catch up another's spirit as can nothing else—swaying boughs, dancing leaves. As she watches she is freed. The earth things let go. Dreams come—dreams that become themes of beauty. . . . Another, when loneliness overpowers her, goes down an old deserted road for a good hard run. She loses self-consciousness in motion; and in the relaxation that follows as she lies on the ground, at

the end of her run, looking up into the sky, the way opens up on and on, beyond far horizons —never the way back.

A woman whom bereavement had left lonely, and who filled every waking moment with activity to crowd the loneliness out, was hurrying from Boston up to a small New England town, intending to transact a matter of business and hurry right back again. In changing cars at a small junction she someway missed her train. There would not be another for hours. Not a place to go, not a thing to do, not a book to read —not even a newsstand. Unable to sit still, she struck out over the hills to *kill time*, that most fiendish of murderings.

At first she was conscious only of the disagreeable things—the clods under her feet, the breeze that tore at her veil, the gnats, the mosquitoes, the glare of the sun. She walked jerkily—stumbled—gasped for breath. But little by little, as she persisted, the earth caught her up; the fragrances, the tang of growing things, the scurrying clouds. She found herself walking more steadily, with longer stride, breathing more deeply, falling imperceptibly into earth's rhythm. At last, on a hilltop, she sank down at the foot of an old oak tree to rest. An oak tree is a splendid thing to lean against, if

one must lean. It gives one something of its own sturdiness against wind and weather. Sitting there looking out across the valley, quiet came into her soul. Her restless fingers ceased their picking at things; her hands lay idle in her lap. She saw that the very thing her life needed was the thing she had been running away from —loneliness, emptiness, so that the things of the spirit could come in. She took the train back to Boston and made a different deal—and a better one; and began to make a different life—and a better one.

Friends—who would minimize the value of friends, of books, of all interesting and useful activity? But when we use them as a sop, as a filler, to escape the message that might come out of the deep silences, are we not accepting the lesser thing when the greater is offered?

Wherever we see a beautiful life being lived, we know that into that life come periods of great loneliness, that bring to it poise and patience. People will tell you of a doubt that was settled: "You see, I was alone that year and things sort of straightened themselves out." A young man told me of a most happy solving of a tangled love affair: "I was on board ship—ill—confined to my stateroom, and I had a chance to think things out. . . ." An Indian who had

turned to the life of the spirit explained it thus: "I was hurt. I was long time alone. I found God." A perfectly natural sequence.

No great book, or statue, or painting was ever conceived, no great decision ever made, no great plan ever perfected, save in the depths of what we call human loneliness, with all bonds for the time severed. God seems to have need of all there is of us when He has a thing of any considerable proportions to be done; and sometimes He must cut away everything else in what may seem like a cruelty to get us at it.

Let us, then, welcome loneliness; let us use it as sanctuary. If we get from it only the understanding that all the world is lonely at times, we have come that much closer to the human heart, and that is well; but it may bring us peace in our lives, it may bring us easement, it may bring light; and always, if we will but let it, it will be as a dip in the cool, deep places of the spirit.

We are but migrants—here for a little—soon to be gone. We came alone. We go alone. Can we not bide with God alone for a little while?

VII

THE UNLIT LAMP

ALL her life she had wanted to do things for her mother—give her care-freeness, leisure, travel. She would do it—some day. In the meantime, she dreamed. She saw the two of them setting out together on long journeys, visiting strange countries, hobnobbing with strange peoples. Oh, she spread a magic carpet on which her mother trod with winged feet: but in reality Mother swept the worn carpet under her actual feet—scrimped, saved, managed—grew gray, worn, old—ill—and finally slipped away from life while her daughter was dreaming of what a wonderful health resort she would take her to—some day. Then she began to dream of a beautiful tombstone she would have erected above her mother's grave, of rare flowers she would plant there, of vines that would cling and bloom and give forth sweet fragrances. But as the years wore on an old sexton packed the earth ever more firmly about the rotting base of the wooden slab to keep it upright.

A mother had several daughters. With their birth she began to dream of their future: It would be Wellesley, or Vassar, or Smith—development in the arts—professions. Continually at her housework, she lived in a dream, her eyes glazed, her mind absorbed, her interest otherwhere. On a trip to the market three blocks away she would get them entered in college—through—into various callings. . . . "Yes, I might as well have stew again as anything—it takes no thought." . . . Absently she would pick up her parcel, resume her dream. . . . And her daughters were never so much as graduated from high school.

Dreaming, dreaming, dreaming—never seeing the nearest loose end to seize, never seeing the smallest possible opening toward the desired outcome, never getting in the tiniest edge of the wedge—never starting, never managing, never accomplishing—just dreaming, dreaming the days away, dreaming the years away.

> Living a life of going to do
> And dying with nothing done.

Don't we all know how it is? To-morrow—I will start on a course of study. To-morrow—I will begin to renovate the house. To-morrow—I will try for the new job or the new outlook.

To-morrow—I will join a club or resign from one. To-morrow—I will register so that I can vote, or I will begin definitely to work for peace, or I'll take an open stand on prohibition, or I'll help with the girls' club or the boys' club, or do something positive to make life more interesting in our town. To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow—but to-day I'll dream—spread the picture. It's a pleasant picture. There's annoyance when some Reality disturbs it. You try to hold fast to it as to a sleeping dream in the midst of which you have been rudely awakened, try to pick up the broken threads, go on with it. You even carry the same dream from day to day like a continued story, laying it aside with reluctance while you half-heartedly attend to some pressing need, living all the time in another world, feet only in this, head in the other, never realizing how little you have actually done, so steadily have you done it in your mind.

We see them all about us—people undeniably good but, as was said of the gods of old, "in action weak"; people who use dreams, prayers, visioning, as escape from problems instead of as windows opening to a light by which those problems could be solved; people whose lamps remain for ever unlit, their loins ungirt.

The dream must come first, of course. We

must have the dream, see the thing we want to do, or the condition we want to bring about—then begin. It doesn't in the least matter how, just so we begin. It doesn't in the least matter how bad a start we make, just so we start. Well begun may be half done, but begun at all is the only thing that really counts. That young woman who dreamed of giving her mother a life of travel had better have begun by taking her for a day into the near-by woods. That mother who dreamed of great colleges for her daughters had better have begun by seeing that they attended grammar school properly fed and clothed and of happy mind. It may seem very prosaic to come out of a rosy dream into the crudity of First Steps, but the First Steps are necessary if the dream is ever to be anything more than a dream—anything more than the mere vapourings of desire; if the dream, the visioning, is not to be utterly wasted on us. And First Steps, in matters large or small, are almost always full of stumblings, with little of the glory of the dream reflected in them.

If you would gain courage, go look at all the First Steps you can find: Read the first book by that author you so admire, see the first house planned by that great architect, the first dress designed by that great modiste; see in imagina-

tion, if you can, the first appearance of that great reader, or singer, or orator, or actress. Go into the first schoolroom of that gifted teacher, the first home of that wonderful home-maker. Find the crudeness, trace the tear stains. They are there; you may not be able to find them but they are there, just as they are all about you when you break from your pleasant dream into reality. Life shows no favours.

For the moment we begin to try to materialize a dream, it's a different thing altogether: we have been working in illusions—we are now working in raw materials. Our dream may be perfect, but our hands are not practised, and the clay is stiff. We must work at it a long time before it becomes pliant. We must shape the figure up here, smooth it down there, add to it, take away, until at last a thing of beauty begins to emerge; maybe not the thing we saw in our dream, but at least a thing that grew out of our dreaming.

You dream of a wonderful house—plan every detail; then you begin to build it, and there isn't a thing you don't change in some way as you proceed. You see a hat in your mind's eye; you order it, giving exact instructions to the milliner; and before it's finished she must give many different twists to straw and silk before it properly

frames your face. Whatever our dream, big or little, from the moment we begin to materialize it we are rearranging, reorganizing, changing, shifting, till in the course of time the thing is worked out satisfactorily—all through blunders, mistakes, false starts, wrong impressions—but we arrive at our final more or less satisfactory performance all through following our dream.

A certain young woman rather prided herself on her ability to live in dreams; instead of regarding it as a form of self-drugging, she looked upon it as proof of a special gift. During lecture or sermon, she was off in a dream. In general conversation she mastered the art of appearing interested, but she really never heard a word that was said. "She'll be a great writer some day," said her friends. "She's always in a dream."

She sought opportunity on a large daily newspaper, and at last the editor gave her a chance: he sent her to interview a Great Man. It was a hot sticky August day. The Great Man was out. She sat down beside his desk to await his return—became absorbed in a dream. The Great Man came in. She aroused sufficiently to state her business, put a question. He sat down —began slowly to talk. A breeze stirred at the window suggesting summer languor among grow-

ing things. She fell to dreaming. Suddenly she became aware that the Great Man had ceased speaking, was rising, intimating that the interview was at an end—and she hadn't heard a word that he had said!

Wilted with worse than any August heat, she dragged back to the newspaper office. The place was empty. She sank limply into a chair before a machine, her whole world fallen about her. The opening she had craved for years—hoped for, worked for, prayed for—lost, utterly, irrevocably lost. What should she tell her editor? How could she tell him that she had got the interview but hadn't heard a word of it? What chance would she have after that? She had understood that the Great Man was difficult—rarely gave interviews; and he had given her audience, had talked, had said things that no doubt the whole world of business would have been glueing its eyes to over the morning paper—if she had only listened! She put her head down on her arms on the typewriter, feeling that she could never, never lift it again. She heard steps. A gruff voice spoke: "Aw, don't take it to heart. The old man didn't expect you to get that interview—it was just a joke. Why, he couldn't get it himself. That guy don't give interviews."

Slowly she lifted her head: a cub was grinning into her tear-wet face. . . . But she *had* got the interview. This only made it worse—no one else could and she *had!* . . . The editor came in, took in the scene, or supposed he did, stopped, scribbled a name on a scrap of paper. "Try this one," he said kindly. "Make him give you his secret of success." Up she bounced, glanced at the name, hurried out to the street. "Now," she said to herself, "no dreaming. Wake—wake wide—and listen! Oh, listen, *on your life!*"

When she had got the successful man to talking, she batted her eyes hard, dug her nails into her palms to hold herself to attention, watched, listened, made mental notes. . . . She returned to her desk holding fast to the interview as if she had it in a pail and might spill it. She got it down on paper—all she had seen, surmised, heard—all the successful man had said. When she had handed in her story, she went back to her typewriter and wrote out one line for her own consumption—pasted it above her desk:

Look, listen—then light into it!

The editor gave her many more interviews. . . .

One of the loveliest dreams-come-true I have

ever watched was that of a violinist who wanted to found a school for children. Her husband was a civil engineer, which gave her a roving existence, and she had no funds of her own—nothing, in fact, but her dream. At last she seemed located with a fair degree of permanence in a small frontier town, many miles from a railroad. She decided to start her school right where she was. She hunted up other music lovers, but they discouraged her: the people wanted nothing but jazz: the children wouldn't practise and their parents wouldn't make them. Hopeless as it seemed, the violinist couldn't give up her dream. She thought and thought. One afternoon she ceased trying to think it out and took up her violin and played it out—there in her tent on the outskirts of the wind-swept little town—played out her prayer to the God she served—fervently, ardently, she played. There came a movement at the tent flap—a small freckled face peeked in, another, another . . . but she played right on.

The next day the three children were back with others. The next day, still others. By the end of the week it seemed that the entire school had come to hear the lady in the tent make music. She selected from the most eager ones. "Would you like to play?" "Would you

like to hold my violin?" She let them take the priceless violin into their smudgy hands. Those who could scarcely lay it down, she marked with a cross, got them together—forty or fifty children—induced their parents to buy them instruments, taught them daily there in the tent, guiding little wrists, little fingers, little ears, little souls. Oh, the good times they had! Why, music wasn't just scales and harsh words as to practice hours: music was listening to a lark and making the violin sing his song back to him; music was listening to the mooing of cows and making the violin moo in the same way; music was waking early to hear the coyotes and making the violin howl as they howled—why, music was the wind blowing across desert sands; music was water falling over stones; music was the honking of geese in high flight—oh, music was just everything in the world, singing!

Gradually, from the simplest themes, she led them into more intricate ones, until, when a year later they gave a concert, they astonished everyone. "The babies! The babies!" cried a great singer, on hearing them. How had it all been done? She wanted to sing with them. . . . But it was very simple: A Dreamer who was also a Doer had come to town.

Another "dream school" is even more vivid

to me: It, too, was in a small town where mothers worried because there was no adequate institute of "higher learning." One woman had the dream—a college woman herself, interested in the natural sciences, and with two sons turning into men faster than the dream school was turning into reality. She started by gathering the young people together for picnics in the woods, then thrusting in bits of information here and there as their "finds" suggested: "That's a camas lily, Lottie. The bulb used to be used by the Indians for flour; they dried it, you see, and beat it to a paste." . . . "There's a show of gold in that stone, Frank. Compare it with the one Tom has, and see how different it is from copper." . . . "That's only mica, Henry; very pretty and shiny, but it has little value." . . . Frogs, horned toads, lizards—each new "find" brought out some special bit of characterization. . . . "Yes, that's a perfect arrowhead, Philip. It's made of obsidian—that's that volcanic lava, something like glass. There's an entire mountain of it near here. We'll hike there someday." . . . All the boys are gathered to hear, all the girls, too . . . arrowheads . . . Indians . . . "And they fought right here? Where we're standing?" . . . Histories were brought out, Indian wars

looked up, an old-timer found who could give first-hand information . . . an old buried village located, excavations made . . . mortars and pestles and queer sorts of implements found. . . .

All that summer—all many summers—the riches of the locality were explored, histories dug out, old records, stories of the founders; and specimens were gathered, and cabinets started, and drawings made, all by a group of river-trooping youngsters with knapsacks over their shoulders and sandwiches tied to belts, youngsters who didn't realize they were attending a school of "higher learning"—didn't realize it, perhaps, till years later when they tried to trace to its earliest inception some special love that had coloured their whole lives. For many notable Americans came out of that small group—and none—no, not one, ever got on the lists of the trouble makers. . . .

Up in Canada there's an out-of-door theatre that was organized by some University professors among the berry-pickers: The professors had the dream, but they hadn't the time during the winter; and they hadn't the players during the summer, with students scattered everywhere on their vacations. But there were the berry-pickers—and there was all out of doors. . . .

It's a great story in itself, that story of the talent they found and developed, the joy in expression they have brought to young men and women who all day long bend their backs in the berry fields under the hot Northern sun. But it's only another story, and not needed to drive the lesson home to us.

Sitting on the edge of a cañon we see a flash of blue against the lovely sycamores. It's a bluebird. We spring up and run lightly in pursuit. . . . It darts from tree to tree, a shimmery bit of exquisite colour against the satiny bark. We follow—it flies on down the cañon's side, carrying us with it; now we rest, panting, against a gnarled old oak tree; now we are in the midst of wild lilac bushes all topped over with pale feathery breath of blossoms; now we are treading among the cane-like stalks of the San Juan tree whose long yellow cups are a lure to whirring humming birds. On flies the bluebird; now we are at the bottom of the cañon where a tiny stream sings on its pebbly way; butterflies flit here and there, resting atop slender green stalks, providing them with temporary blossoms; a snake measures its mottled length over the ground. It isn't always easy going—there are things to be avoided and obstacles to be surmounted. We must skip from stone to stone;

we slip occasionally—splash! we're in—but we're out again, for there's the bluebird on ahead. We follow—follow—follow—till we come out at last to the open sea! The great, wide, limitless blue sea! Ah, God—we hadn't known anything could be so wonderful.

We hear a weak little "cheep"—look up: it's only the bluebird resting there on the sandy cliff, poor little tired bluebird, a bit draggled, some feathers gone; it flies away and we forget it in the wonders to which we have had our eyes opened. We forget the little tuft of blue that shimmered fitfully against the sky in the sublimity of that vaster, steadier blue to which it has brought us.

The bluebird was our dream—the dream that came to us sitting there on the cañon's rim, wondering what was down in that deep gash of earth, what it led out to. The way looked steep—there seemed no well-defined path, but we plunged in, followed through. But so many there are who never go beyond the cañon's rim—just sit there in the shimmery light watching the bluebird come and go.

Oh, it's a glorious thing to follow a dream! The dreamer who dreams only has no idea of all that he misses—the fine full splendour of seeking his own particular treasure at the end of his own

particular rainbow. Some have found it in the arts, some in the sciences; some at the poles, some at the bottom of the sea; some in the high places of the air, some in the atoms of earth; some in long-buried civilizations, some in the civilization that surrounds us; some in fastening established good more firmly to life, some in blazing new trails to new good; some in service, some in song. And some of us for ever keep the fires burning in our hearts on altars we have builded to other dream-followers.

If only all who sit on the cañon's rim watching a bluebird would rise and follow after it, how we would speed up the coming of that day that has been the long dream of man since first his thoughts soared heavenward—that day when all the crooked places shall be made straight and the straight places beautiful, when the morning stars shall sing together and all the earth rejoice because we shall at last have found the way through following the dream.

VIII

THE SECOND DREAMING

IT WAS the evening star that did it—such a steadily glowing star shining down out of an amber and blue sky in Southern California: a glory flooded my being—a glory and a rapture. All at once, as in a dreaming, I saw—under the star everywhere—love in the world, love for every one lighting every life with an unfailing radiance, lifting everyone up, lifting faces, lifting eyes; bringing joy and a great singing. . . . Then it was gone. . . . I thought back along the years to that first dreaming: I saw a young girl standing at a window in a far-distant country, but looking to the same star—asking, "Star, what will Life bring to me?"—asking, night after night—never done asking. Oh, there is never but one thing for which a young girl asks when she looks, dreaming, to the evening star.

That first dreaming—how it concerns itself with one's own: with love—true, but one's own love, one's own life, one's own future. And as the dream begins to materialize, how bound up

one becomes in it! One's own little home—how important it is! No trees ever grew from the good earth with such a destiny as those that became lumber for its walls. No factory ever turned out bits of furniture so important. How great a disaster is the first marring—how one rubs and scrubs and mends! Then the little garden—that tiny plot of earth fenced off from all the rest of the great old globe—how careful one is to choose just the right flowers for it, the right vines. . . . "Yes, a peach tree by the south wall, by all means!" . . . And then the babies begin to come—such absorption in each detail! . . . Which set of patterns? Which book for advice? Later, it's diet, and playmates, and schools—intense absorption. Two vertical lines come into one's brow. Ears all but close to everything not pertaining directly to one's own. . . . The years move on and the duties become more engrossing. Daughters must be guided—sons looked after. Friction arises—arguments—nights of lying awake. . . . Whom was Jimmy out with? Why is Fanny so late? . . . Sleeplessness—worry—unremitting care.

And then, suddenly, like a bottom that falls out, it's all gone and there isn't any family any more. They are flying now, by their own wings

—far, far away—and Mother, with empty nest, looks on aghast.

She thinks there is nothing left for her, because there is nothing, or at least so little, of what was —of that first dreaming. Sometimes she turns frantically about and tries to re-live her life in her daughter's life: for the daughter is now absorbed in all that is her own. . . . "Not that way, Fanny; this!" . . . The daughter hears it continually—Mother's acquired wisdom attempting to graft itself on to inexperience; as if inexperience could ever gain experience through the grafting method, as if inexperience could ever become experienced save by experiencing. . . . "Not that colour, Fanny; this!" "Not that way to broil steak, Fanny; this!" . . . Poor Fanny! Her mother just won't let her live her own life, but must live it for her. She wishes to heaven Mother would get something of her own to do, but poor Mother, deep in a re-dreaming of her own first dream, stumbles blindly on, making a mess of her life, and unless some special wisdom enter in, of her daughter's. Yes, that "other woman" is responsible for most of the marital disorders, but she is usually an interfering relative who "means well."

Again, Mother may turn back to a second youth of her own: she looks closely into the mir-

ror—carries her hand glass to the sunlight. Ah, a gray hair! She pulls it out—parts carefully, looking for others—is depressed as, day after day, the pulled-out hairs make a higher pile on her dressing table. Examines with alarm the faint lines in her face—stands off—sees she is growing stout—those hips, they've crept on her unawares. . . . Gradually there comes to be but one topic when she meets her friends—reducing. . . . "No, thank you, I'm off sweets; well, this once won't matter, I guess, as I *never* eat them at home." . . . The subject moves on—now it's bobbed hair. "*Have* you seen Mrs. Brown with her hair bobbed? I tell you, *she looks like a girl!*" That does get a rise: the chatter stops—everybody listens. There's audience for any recipe that will make one "look like a girl." . . . "I can't believe it!" "I think it's horrid!" "Well, hairpins *are* a nuisance." "Think how easy to wash one's hair!" "And the saving of time!" . . . But down underneath all the objections and concessions burns one thought—"They say she looks like a girl." For awhile Mother will play with the idea—sit lingeringly before her mirror, lifting her locks, shaping them into a "bob." But eventually, unless Father absolutely puts his foot down on it—which of course would be foolish,

for it is a sane custom—there'll be another bobbed head among the grandmothers. But it won't be the sanity of it, or the convenience, or even the comfort and cleanliness that will have done it—she will discover all this later. It will be that other—"They say she looks like a girl!" . . . Nature has her own way of getting us to do sane things, you see.

Then there is the woman who stepped from college into broader activities, who has never had her own domestic life. She, too, begins to tremble at the first indications that as many years are behind her as are on ahead. . . . "Just think! I've been out of college ten years!" exclaimed a teacher with sudden poignance; but what she meant was, "Why, I'm getting old, and I haven't lived!" That sudden frenzy—Life going! Life going! . . . And she, too, begins to shrink from what she imagines on ahead—from empty years with youth fading.

And sometimes the mother-woman says bitterly: "If I had it to do over again I would develop my own talents instead of bringing up a family: then I'd have a place of my own in the world when I began to grow old!" . . . And sometimes the career woman says bitterly: "If I had it to do over again I would marry and have a family: then I would have someone of my own

to care for when I began to grow old!" . . . Each seeing only her own loneliness—not the other's at all. Each envying the other, seeing only the advantages in the other's position.

But it isn't really emptiness in the years on ahead that causes that gripping sense of loneliness—it's another thing that neither has realized—it's the withdrawing of the first dream. Its work done, its reason for being ended, it now withdraws to make room for the second dreaming: and this is the surprise that life has in store for them—they hadn't known about that second dreaming. They had thought the first was all.

In youth it's as if we sat before a frame, lifting our eyes every now and then to the pattern that is ever before us, trying to repeat the pattern—the ideal—in the work of our hands. And then the work is finished—our part in it—and the pattern removed; and we are bewildered, thinking there no longer is a pattern. But a little patience, a little looking ahead, and a new pattern takes its place. God lifts it a little higher, that is all, and we must lift our eyes to see it, but the pattern is there.

But let us go back: That first intense concentration on one's own, be it home or career—what is it *for?* Nature never does things hap-

hazardly; every smallest thing is for a purpose. Why is this young person so imbued with zeal for her own? Nature has her reason—it's to get life's most important work done. Nature had to make the young mother over-concentrated to be sure she'd be concentrated enough, just as she had to give us ten times the lung power we ordinarily need to take care of emergencies. If the young home-maker sensed fully the whole great power and sublimity of life, she might let the potatoes burn. The vision can become so broad that details sink into insignificance—and details are never insignificant. If a young musician's thoughts were bound up too exclusively in the music of the spheres, she might not practise her scales sufficiently ever to bring a sense of that music to our duller ears. Our needs seem to require, at times, a closing of the senses to the greater themes; thus only, perhaps, can we have patience to acquire the very technique that creates greatness.

Every little home is a cell in the world's body, and the health of the whole depends on the health of each individual cell. The young home-maker thinks she is in a home for her own happiness—at least, it was following a dream of happiness that got her into it. But the truth is that once she is in Nature takes hold and binds her fast,

to her own ends. The young home-maker becomes, at Nature's behest, the conservator, the builder, the unremitting caretaker. True, Nature softens her task with illusions: she permits her to think she is doing it all for herself; permits her to say *my* husband, *my* home, *my* baby—smiles, humouring her in the conceit, keeping the truth to herself till her work is finished that it is all the time Life's man she is conserving, Life's baby she is moulding, Life's home she is keeping sweet. She may say "my husband," but Life claims him through his business, the community, the state; she may say "my baby," but very soon he is more any one else's—his playmates', his teacher's—and then he goes out into another cell centre of his own in which she has small part; she may say "my house"—but the grass and the roses of it belong to every passer-by, the atmosphere of it to her family and friends, the financial value to that real-estate man whose profits go up in proportion as her home improves the neighbourhood.

Hers to create, to conserve, to love—yes: but in the end Life's, for Life's purposes—a puff, and it's all gone from her—gone, as fishes to the sea, for other nets than hers.

And the career woman: she, too, says *my* art, *my* music, *my* schoolroom, *my* business—*my*

everything. Old Nature is at work here, too—letting her think that way about it in her youth to get her to do it. For Nature must have burning youth in her arts, her specialties; she must have youth in all her creating. But long after the artist's flesh is dust the picture she painted inspires thousands—it remains Life's. The song went out from the singer and the singer went from memory, but the inspiration of it lives again in some other where it re-creates inspiration. The youngsters pour out of the schoolroom and their teacher receives a salary for her services, but it is Life that has the benefit of the impress of her hands on their clay. Life must have the stirrings and strainings and strivings and aspirings after beauty and accomplishment, or else no Caliban would lift from the mire. And so youth is drafted.

If we but lift our eyes from ourselves and our thoughts from repinings, we see all this, and in the full vision we are lifted from concentration on our own merely as our own, to concentration on the work under our hands as Life's own. We become more impersonal. We are ready to go on in service to life for Life's sake. We become at one with life. And in this yielding up of ourselves to the Greater Purpose, new growth catches us up. We see we have not reached the

end; we are only at the beginning. We have done much blindly: we are now sighted.

In so-called desert countries, when they get water, the first thing a settler does is to plant a row of trees for a windbreak. At first they appear very lonesome, each little tree standing there by itself in the great flat empty country. But go back after a few years, and what do you see? Those that persisted toward their destiny in spite of pests and blight and drought and cold have mingled their branches 'way up there in the blue sky, and there is no longer loneliness for them; but some there are that are lonely—those that never got up very far, dwarf trees, stunted, turned back in on themselves, not young any more, not at one with the young shoots and seedlings, only preserving some of youth's form; not dignified with the beauty of ripened age—poor little dwarf trees.

But, oh, the beauty up there in the tree-tops! There are songs up there; that's where the birds sing their sweetest. There is sunlight up there; it's far up out of the clutch of shadows. There is blue sky up there; the dust of earth scarcely reaches those heights. One looks with pity on the stubby little dwarf trees that got so far, then began to try to cramp back again into youth's form—lonely—for ever a misfit.

The woman of to-day who has seen forty or fifty years of history in the making has seen world boundaries change and the boundaries of her own small world with them. She has seen the old-fashioned, heavily built, three-storied house with its air of permanence give way to the bungalow with its birds'-nest air of impermanence. She has seen that the old-fashioned home was an incubator of much good and much bad: it was self-centred; it was fenced; it wore blinds; it shut out the world. But she has seen its well-kept lawn where a few privileged children played spread through its gates to parks and playgrounds for all children; she has seen its small private reading room where a few adults had the opportunity for enlightenment emerge into public reading rooms for all; she has seen the pouring out of the good that was generated in the individual home into the larger world—into clubs, societies, gymnasiums, schools, libraries, and social centres. She has seen the beginning of the realization of the dream to make the whole world as safe, sacred, and joyous a place for mankind as she formerly attempted to make her fireside for her blood-own—the whole world a family fireside for man.

Where, definitely, shall she begin? Perhaps her thoughts fly to some long-buried desire.

Well and good. Whatever she once may have done she still can do—barring the crippling of disease. We can retire our own brain cells by lack of use, by allowing poisons to clog our systems, but they do not retire themselves—and then there's that nine tenths of unused brain which we may all call into service if we will. Let each one set forth on a voyage of discovery in her own depths—in her own home town.

I had a buoyant letter just recently from a woman who has brought up a large family, in which she said, "I'm having the happiest time of my whole life, teaching foreigners at night school." Right there in the same schoolrooms to which she sent her toddlers twenty years ago.

I frequently meet a woman on whose face is such a shining that I am always impelled to stop and watch her. Left alone at fifty, most of her adult years spent in business, she adopted a baby. When it was a year old, fearing she was too hungrily attached to this one wee mite, she made a second adoption, then a third. I met her on the street in New York City not so long ago, and she seemed so eagerly pursuing something that I accused her of buying toys, little dresses. She laughed, happily. "What I am really here for," she said, "is to find a baby boy.

My little girls just must have a brother to grow up with!" Not the sights and sounds of America's greatest city engrossed her, but the discovery of a bit of human flotsam to carry away home with her, and love, and present with opportunity. I never see her among her babies that I do not realize afresh that motherhood is more spiritual than physical, and that it doesn't so much matter which woman does the borning—it's the loving that counts.

I know another woman who in the release of her middle years studied medicine and is to-day leading a highly useful and interesting life. Of course, her family protested with that vigour and blindness so often manifested by those who love us. "You are too old!" "You will squander all your money!" "Be content to live frugally within your means." Vegetate into the grave—that is what their advice really meant. But she was brave enough to risk her money to develop a gift God had risked in her keeping: and she has been rewarded even as she was brave.

It's not just a living that awakened women need—it's a life, a reason for being, a purpose.

A magnificent-spirited woman recently left us in her early eighties—Helen Ekin Starrett: a

clergyman's wife, she early became a widow with seven children and almost no means. Being a clergyman's wife and giving birth to seven children wouldn't seem to be a programme fitting one for the technique of world success, and yet, when you analyse it, you can see that it might be. She taught, took private pupils, founded a girls' school that became one of the most notable of her time, established every one of her seven children in places of security, became a lecturer, a writer on morals and manners for girls, retired at seventy-five to a quiet home in Oregon to do work that had lain dormant in her mind for years as needing to be done, and died, leaving, as she felt, so much unfinished, so much that she might have accomplished if she had only had more time! I visited her a few days before her going, and that was her only regret—that she was leaving so much unfinished work. She insisted on having news of others who were doing things, and when I gave it to her, she cried out in a vibrant voice and with shining eyes: "Oh, life, *life*—it is such a privilege!"

Emptiness—that is what makes the aching void through which regrets and repinings echo and reëcho. Emptiness—hollow, echoing emptiness—the years stretching out ahead filled only

with memories and vain regrets. There is, perhaps, no suffering equal to the suffering of nothingness, no work so wearing as the wearing away of barrenness, no grief so poignant as the grief for that which has never been—all, all the possible outcome of every woman, the ghost that begins to stalk with the coming of the later years.

Then flaunt the ghost! Fill the emptiness! Trim the wick and light the lamp afresh! Rise on the wings of the second dreaming into broader service. Adopt a work. Never mind whether or not you need the money—*you need the work.* Adopt a baby. Never mind whether or not it needs you—*you need it.* Make a home for young business women and send young life out into the community that will rise up and call you blessed. Board little children; save them from the lovelessness of an institution and yourself from hardened love arteries. Keep something young and human in the house—as you would a piano—for love practise. Take the talent you have, even though it seem ever so dulled over with neglect, and rub it into a glow. Begin to do what deep inside you always knew you could do if you only had the chance, and you will find that you read truly and that you now have the chance. Rise steadily on the wings of the second dreaming into the glory heights of the later years, those years

into which Browning gave evidence of such true insight when he issued that comrade's invitation:

> Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life, for which the first was made.

IX

LOVE'S HARVEST

IN THE spring a gardener planted the seed of the moonflower, called deathless; then he went on about his serious business of cultivating cabbages. In the autumn he came again to see how his moonflower had prospered and lo, it lay withered and dead. Mystified, he sat down on a sunken bench, and he thought, "They always said that the moonflower was deathless." And a voice said to the gardener—the voice one may hear in gardens if one is very still, "It is true that the moonflower is the most vital of all plants, but one thing is fatal to it—neglect."

And so with love, that most nearly deathless flower in the whole garden of human emotions, like the moonflower, knows but one fatal disease, neglect; another name is starvation. I wonder if many of the people who sit alone in their gardens in the autumn of their lives among the flowers they planted with such buoyant expectancy in the springtime, spy out the withered moonflower, love, in the overlay of coarser

growths, and know what killed it? Perhaps—perhaps not. But—"If I had life to live over again!" Ah, how the eyes flash at the suggested boon—"If I had life to live over again!"

"What would you do if you had life to live over again?" I asked one of these.

"I would cultivate love." She looked at me out of eyes that faced facts—rare eyes. "I cultivated love's crop, perhaps," she went on, "but no, not love. With the coming of my first baby I pushed my husband away from my side as comrade and friend into a sort of nebulous limbo where he gradually took on the character of a source of supply, a messenger, a handy errand boy, 'baby's papa,' anything but the comrade he had been. In those days—for other babies came—I was glad when he found a way to amuse himself; I seemed to feel that I had another baby in him, and if some other nurse took him out and kept him well and happy I was satisfied.

"With each new baby I was like a child with a new doll; I didn't want the least interference. Had the all-consuming new interest been another man, a woman friend, a club, a work, or an art, plenty of wagging heads would have signalled danger ahead; but as it was a baby everyone justified me, even praised me. Well, when my

babies got from under my constant mothering, I began to feel lonely and turned again to my husband, but by then our lives were running on different rails. We had no real contacts. It was natural that love died."

"Babies, then, do interfere with love between a man and a woman?"

"On the contrary—if a woman uses judgment! But, you see, a baby has the use of his brain from the first cry, and with a mother of the hundred-per-cent. doting variety he becomes a perfect little tyrant, demanding all of her and absorbing her every thought. Her husband never feels that she is actually with him, even when by his side. She is not with him in spirit, and he knows it, and resents it. She loses all social sense, all sense of obligation to be a worth-while companion. A wife constantly listening for the sound of some other voice, even his own baby's voice, is no more charming a companion to her own husband than to any one else. A husband is still an individual, and when he gives another his time—even his own wife—he expects and is entitled to intelligent companionship. The marriage tie does not change human nature, well—he finds it elsewhere, that's all."

Just as frequently love is starved by the husband, who, becoming absorbed in his business

as the wife does in her babies, takes her for granted and lets her sink colourlessly into the household group he is supporting, instead of always and for ever marking her out as his queen among women. For there is still a place for kings and queens in the world, however completely these royal personages have lost out in the business of ruling nations, and that place is in the home. Royalty had its inception in a high ideal of the people, that of placing the finest person in the realm on the throne and then paying him unfailing homage, thus constantly exercising the highest aspirations of one's own nature. And so it should be in every mating; this woman and this man, each crowning the other as supreme, should always in word and deed as well as thought acknowledge each other's supremacy. Love has a language of its own made up of such words as appreciation, admiration, recognition, tenderness, sympathy, loyalty—and again loyalty and all the time loyalty. We have acquired the vocabulary, perhaps, but we do not always apply it correctly. Neither husbands nor wives so often fail each other in the big actual duties as in the apparently unimportant little ones; and it is the little tributaries that feed the stream.

One of the most striking cases I ever knew of

a man marring the full, fine flower of love's perfect blooming was of this nature. This man, who had the habit of generously showering attentions on his women relatives and friends, married a beautiful girl of rare devotional nature, who constantly invested him with kingship. But he, from one of those strange perversities so difficult to understand, seemed to recognize no super-claim in this girl who had given herself to him. His outward attentions to her never marked her as one sacredly apart from all others in his life; apparently, he merely attached her to his retinue. If inspired to send her up a box of candy, he sent duplicate boxes to others; if, in passing a shop window, the gleam of a jewel-tinted sweater caught his eye, he ordered one for her—and duplicates for his sisters, or her sisters, or friends! Mrs. Brown, across the street, whose husband was associated with him in business, received a bouquet of luscious bride's roses from the same assortment that went to his wife. I really think a woman would rather be omitted entirely from the attentions of the man she loves than be lumped in this fashion on an equal footing with other women; and it may be that this particular wife was unable to express the enthusiastic thanks that others expressed. However it was, it came about in time

that he frequently remembered others without remembering her, even on such occasions as birthdays, Christmases, and other sacred anniversaries. The same attitude governed him in all his social contacts; constantly he gave the fine flavour of expressed appreciation, the toast at dinner, the public support of a pet cause, the applauded witticism, the open praise, to the stranger, to the person who merely brushed past and was gone, to one to whom such a demonstration could at most give but a fleeting pleasure, while this one woman, to whom such attentions would mean everything in life, was utterly denied them. And though she never for a moment doubted his loyalty in the big issue, though she believed deep in her heart that he loved her devotedly, still joy gradually fell from her as petals from a dying rose. It is not enough for a woman to know the truth. She must know that others know it.

The hardest thing to bear is not privation, or even intended neglect, but the blind cruelties of those for whom we live our lives.

Then, too, there is another angle on the thing: that of psychology, for assuredly there is a psychology that shapes our ends no whit less than a destiny, and psychology is not beyond our control. That woman who is queen of her hus-

band's heart, who lives in an atmosphere of expressed devotion, is very apt to be a queen among women; while the man whose position of supremacy is never rocked at its foundations in his own home carries out among men an air of kingship that inspires the respect and homage of outsiders. To seem a man of importance is on the way to becoming a man of importance. The whipped dog gets whipped-dog ranking. The same rule holds good with children; the loved child, with his head up, his eyes dauntless, his stride sure, his attack positive, dominates wherever he goes; while the neglected child, who goes dodging and slinking about with covert eyes and sagging knees, expecting something to hit him, generally gets hit. If you really want your own to be a success with the world, make them a very apparent success with you. No investment is so gilt-edged as the investment of intelligently expressed love. Nothing pays so well in whatever coin you choose to reckon your receipts.

Intimacy, we all know, is a strain. Perhaps nothing less than divine love can make it possible for two people to live in each other's lives without damaging friction. Even when love is real and deep and true, human nature does not decamp, and much is needed if the tension, which at times arises, does not reach the snapping

point. It is well, then, even in the truest of love unions, to have a care, remembering always that lovers are reducible to mere human beings, each with his pet abominations. Avoid the malady of disturbances, for, like children's diseases—which we once ignorantly regarded as a necessity—most disturbances can be avoided. Out of friction, understanding may come, and eventually peace, but the finest union is that which friction has not marred by its scars. Every scar is a callus, and we can afford no avoidable calluses on the fine sensitive surface of our natures, for this sensitive surface is all that we have with which to feel our way through life.

It is well to remember, too, that while intimacy has its dangers—the two having an eye on each other in the let-down of life—it also has its advantages, for most of us are really better than we appear on the surface. We stand knowing—in the test the best comes out, and it is surprisingly good. The real strain, again, is in the little things, not the big. A lawyer has said that difference of opinion as to the use of the bathtub leads to more divorce than any other one thing. Personally, I have always thought that the real Japanese peril to the American home was the Japanese kimono. It seems to me the keynote of the domestic slump, the unattrac-

tive let-down with which go careless hair dressing, flopping slippers, and a state of mind that expresses itself in passivity, in drift, and eventually in fault-finding, nagging, lack of self-respect, and lack of respect for the other members of the household—the very cancer of domestic diseases, and yet curable, if taken early. I often recall the retort of a grizzled old mountaineer who was chopping wood near his cabin, when a storm-bound motoring party asked if they might find shelter for the night. "Go in and ask the old woman," he shouted back, "it's all I can do to stay here myself!" Unfortunately, he belongs to a numerous class.

Another disagreeable habit—one that stands out among many little ones women get into all unknowingly—is the habit some women have of opposing their husbands in open discussion with outsiders. We are not asking women to become mere echoes, goodness knows. Each woman is an individual with a right to her own opinions and to the expression of them, but it is not always necessary to express one's opinion in trivial matters when it goes absolutely counter to one's husband's opinion, especially when he is trying to hold up his side of an argument with an outsider. It is a fine thing to follow a code in such matters, a code of together-

ness. A woman should stand with her husband whenever possible, rather than against him; the thing itself may not be of half as much importance as the harmony you may secure by your loyalty. Then there are the thousand and one little pricks and stings that arise from differences in home training, early habits, lack of discipline, and varying emphasis on different values. Mothers have not all trained their sons so that æsthetic wives may not be daily crucified by the chewing of toothpicks, the removal of coats, the tucking-in of napkins, the sprawling of legs, and all the other sheer male expressions of relaxation. Some men can be taught better ways after they become husbands, but always the teacher must rule by love and not by rancour. Our personal habits seem to be our most sensitive tendrils, and if they are to be nipped we must be anæsthetized by love's tenderness. Love must dominate, love must master, love must be the final conquerer.

When you strip the matter down to the naked truth you will find that the woman who is graceless to her own, or the man who is graceless to his own, is relying on the legality of the marriage to hold it together. If only, just for a minute, the legality could be lifted, like crutches, from under the arms of all marriages. I wonder

how many would stand by the strength of the deeper bond? It would be an interesting experiment. There is altogether too much reliance on the ceremony to hold the marriage fast, rather than on the cultivation of the moonflower of love. Remember, it was love that first gave you this man, this woman, not the ceremony; the ceremony was merely the yoke love was willing to have riveted on, the proof of love. Don't use it as a whip handle.

Then, again, certain types of women settle back into a sort of complacent self-sufficiency in sex virtue. If they are true and good, they ask, what more can their men want? True and good! Why, women have been nothing else for generations; men have made women that, they have required it; their truth and goodness are a product of men's insistence. That battle was fought out for you by your ancestors, and you have accepted the result of their struggle and handed it on to the man of your choice as your own highest gift. It is not your gift at all, it is the gift of your ancestors. What is your own gift to him?—not your mother's or your grandmother's, but your own, of yourself, out of yourself? What torch do you light in his life? What spark do you fan into a flame? What do you give him of joy? What do you do toward

constructing the domestic side of his life in a way to compensate him for maintaining it? "Old stuff," said a friend of a play taking its keynote from mid-Victorian ideas. "Old stuff," I feel like saying whenever I hear a woman wail in self-defence, "I was always true to him!" Of course you were, but how true were you to the big truths of life? Life is a vital growing thing with small place for mere absence of wrong-doing. There must be positive right doing.

On the whole, in spite of all our questionings and grumblings, marriage is civilization's most splendid achievement. How beautifully the ends of man have been worked out through it where the mating has been true and the dispositions wholesome! How deathless a purpose it has given to life! For true love looks far ahead, like a steady pilot, beyond the gnarling, snarling waves, and steers tirelessly toward a definite goal. True love laughs at disaster, is never becalmed in disappointment, but ever moves on immersed in the larger faith, carried along on that Greater Stream where the small frictions are but as flotsam and jetsam, the stream of the Eternal. True love is the illuminator of the way, and in its light the small annoyances sink into insignificance. The work one does and the love of one's life are as two hands clasped, fingers

interlocked in fingers, on that bracing principle of great bridges—one span pulling against the other, only to strengthen it, never dragging on its strength.

Yes, we have such unions—that is why the world is as good as it is; and that we have not more of them is why it is as bad as it is. These unions do not make the splash on the surface that the other kind make, and so we are in danger of thinking them rare. A calm sea is taken for granted by the ship's passengers, but let one denizen of the deep spout his malfeasance on the surface, and every passenger is at the rail's side exclaiming.

The great ordeal through which we have passed has rocked the boat of civilization. Along with all the other upheavals there was threatened the upheaval of domestic relations; there were ugly whispers in those dark days, but now we are emerging in the light of a new day stronger than ever in one understanding, however much other things may go to pot—and that is that love must rule the world. And love, supreme earthly love, comes at its highest between one woman and one man, the eternal partners in creation.

With love's illumination on the way, with the partnership-with-God ideal kept steadily in

mind, against which to balance the petty things that prick and sting—and love is of the Eternal —isn't it easy, after all, to throw them overboard and move serenely on? Can't the light from Greater Love throw its rays across your path and lift you out of absorption in the small annoyances? Isn't this, after all, the supreme panacea? Do you need to dwell on the flotsam and jetsam that follow along at the ship's side when on ahead are the glorious rays of the rising sun to draw you steadily into its unfolding light?

In every family they say there is a skeleton, but I like best to think that in every family there is a beautiful love story over which young people may dream and to which they aspire. With me it was always my Aunt Margaret. The story trickles through from this source and that, with different colourings according to the tellers, but always with the same conclusion, that it was beautiful. Margaret, a plain Quakerish girl of seventeen, daughter of a spiritual-minded, saintly natured clergyman, fell madly in love with a handsome, dashing captain of a steamboat, who played cards, wore stunning clothes and a gold ring, and who fell equally as madly in love with her. Of course, a marriage between them was utterly out of the question in the opinion of her very religious parents, and

equally, of course, having spunk as well as spirituality, she eloped with the captain. It was the family blot, the family skeleton; but oh, how that skeleton came to be enfleshed and garmented! The love which began in such fiery fashion welded them into the strongest, happiest of unions. We would call them ultra-moderns did they but live to-day, for she went right on being a Quakerish, saintly woman, wearing her drab colours and calmly doing her good works, and he went right on being a dashing gentleman, wearing stunning clothes and delighting in lively company. Neither tried to remake the other, but each gave the other ground room for individual blooming, as two plants might say, "We can't bloom alike, but it is a joy to be here in the same window under the same sun and watch each other bloom."

Deep down under the world activities of each life, so different in character, there was a strong current of true relationship, what we would modernly call a true affinity, which strengthened mightily with the passing years. Apparently, they never tired of each other. It became steadily more his pleasure to contribute to the success of her many altruistic undertakings, having perfect faith that if Margaret saw the need the thing must be done; while she, recognizing his love of

beauty, gave him a home in which every aspect pleased, where every turn was lovely with the loveliness of colour, harmony, and pleasant ways. He paid no penalties for her preference for the quiet tones of life; she paid no penalties for his love for gaiety; they met splendidly on the points they had in common, and where they differed each permitted the other to go his way unfretted and unfettered. There was no ownership in the union, no compulsion.

She was the first to pass out of her life up in the seventies, though neither had thought of themselves as old. With her going life seemed to lose its meaning for him, and he was soon afterward reduced to an armchair and his dreams. And here, for a year and more, he sat and drowsed and dreamed—of Margaret. With a tablet on his armchair he sat there and wrote memories of her, made word paintings caught up out of the long, beautiful years. Toward the end he lived steadily in visions of Margaret. One day he had a peculiarly happy vision, his face shone as he told of it. He saw sweeping out before him a wide valley all misted over with soft shadowy purple and gold, and presently he saw coming down from the heights a long procession of figures in floating draperies, the edges of which were caught up and lost in the misty

clouds. The procession moved on down through the centre of the valley, it came nearer—he started up—he half rose in his chair, he reached out his arms, and his face was filled with the supernal joy of a boy beholding his own first beloved—and he called out ringingly, vibrantly, "Margaret, Margaret!" for it was she who led the hosts. And thus he passed out to her who had symbolized for him love at its highest.

This is the supreme crown of life; this is the love which passeth understanding; this is that for which the world is well lost.

X

THE BRAKE ON THE WHEEL

THERE is a quality in the nippy air to-day that brings to my mind a day in the glad young girlhood of a girl whom I know as well, perhaps, as any on earth. A day when life bubbled like a spring, a crisp, fair, golden day among the hills of the Yakima valley; a day with a runaway in it—wild horses tearing over rough country, a slim, young body hurled like a thing rejected of life into a mass of stones—and the thought that flashed into the girl's mind with the realization of serious injury.

"Now I will do something: now I will work."

For she was of that breed that loves not to go steadily toward one definite goal, but to laugh and play down the sunlit byways of life: and at the same time, flowing more deeply, as an undercurrent to an apparently shallow stream, was the need to make life count on the side of accomplishment. Cruel, it seemed of Mother Nature, so evenly to have balanced the two. But now, as though tired of dalliance, the wise old Dame

had sent the god of blight along to give check to the shallower one that the deeper might have its will.

In the years that followed, handicapped by a body that could not always keep up with the dictates of vagrant fancies, the girl worked, and thought, and listened—tremendously listened, for so often she could only lie still with closed eyes—but with all her suffering she never lost sight of her indebtedness to the runaway. She saw that she had needed this brake on the wheel of her life. It did for her what is never done for many people. It provided an artificial check to waste.

I called one day to see Hazel Hall, who has now left us: her first volume of verse had just been published, and she had received a national prize for the best poetry published during the year. I found her in a wheel-chair by a window. The inspiration for her poems came through that one window, or from an occasional view of the stairway—someone going up, someone coming down. She learned patience in developing her fine, high art from watching the raindrops come steadily, one by one, all together forming the swishing rivers that border the shining streets. Long years she supported herself doing embroidery. She did marvellous work; no such work

was seen elsewhere in her town; all the brides wanted it on their linen. The fineness with which her slim white fingers wove the threads was suggested by the delicacy of the pansy faces that peered through her window, each one complete, nothing unfinished, nothing hurried, nothing hidden, all perfect, to the last leaf.

Run through history, biography; observe the names that stand out for every school child to ponder over: Napoleon, an epileptic; Stevenson, tubercular; Sam Johnson, scrofulous; Milton, who wrote himself blind in defence of his country, then in solitude sang the greatest poem of the age; Pope, mentally and physically sick; Walter Scott, clearing off a huge debt while a great sufferer, but who said, "I have no idea of such things preventing a man from doing what is in his mind"; Charles Lamb, fighting brain sickness. And oh, so many now living, were it kind to call their names, who have fought through to notable achievement under the severest sort of handicap.

If we but call to mind the cases about which we know in quiet circles, we shall soon hang our heads in shame over our own self-excuses. I am thinking now of Sylvia, who has dragged a lame foot always, but has made such a success of designing little children's clothes that her shop, with its dozen or more helpers, is a sunny spot

in the world for herself and many mothers. I am thinking of a teacher of dramatic art, an unfolder of the truth and beauty in plays. The fact that she doesn't move from her chair without a cane does not prevent the light from her illumined mind reaching other minds with the unbroken directness of a sun's ray. I am thinking of a man I know who had to do all his nature studying through young boys and girls whom he would bribe to read to him, his own eyes being too defective to risk spending in such reckless fashion—and how he became not only one of the deepest students of literature, an authority in his town, but responsible for a whole crop of studiously inclined young people whom he had garnered in to help him. It's well, sometimes, that we must share our seekings.

I am thinking of successful wives, such famous ones as Mrs. Robert Browning and Mrs. Bob Burdette, nearly always helpless on couches, but each the inspiration of her husband's work; of Mrs. Edward MacDowell, on crutches, but ideally companioning America's greatest composer and still carrying on with one of the noblest pieces of work being done in the world to-day; of Mrs. Graham Bell, stone-deaf, but the inspiration of her husband's greatest achievement, and his perfect comrade. I am thinking of a young

woman I know who had infantile paralysis in her childhood, was left with a stiff arm and side, but who went through college, was one of the most popular girls of her time by reason of her sweet, equable nature, married, and is to-day a lovely wife with a husband who adores her. I am thinking of a middle-aged woman who died recently. Comparatively few realized that she had lived, owing to her semi-invalidism, but her husband at her grave said:

"Always I knew she would be there waiting for me, waiting to hear all about my day, its little troubles and triumphs—every little detail that had any bearing on my endeavours; ready to bring her fresh, fine mind to bear on my least problem, to talk it all out to the end. . . . My God, how like cutting off a man's right arm it is to lose such a wife!"

And unknowing ones had pitied him. . . . He didn't live a great while, it truly seeming as if an operation had been performed too severe for his recovery.

Oh, they are everywhere. I wish I could adequately present just one picture that I came upon this past summer far out on a desert frontier in a little homesteading cabin, where the occasional traveller stops for a meal: open sky, vast desert sands, not even a road that

stays, and this woman with the shining in her eyes, patiently waiting there for a railroad that their ranch products may be taken out to market. Patiently waiting, and telling, while she serves her excellent beans and potatoes and bacon, how the desert had saved her to usefulness, to help her husband in his desire to get a home on the land, for once she had been set aside as a "lunger."

It almost seems, sometimes, that all the worthwhile lives are those to whose bodies Nature has attached a ball and chain of some kind, shouting, "Not so fast!" And it is surprising how many lives are lived through in apparently sound bodies without turning out a product that the world would have missed; till one might almost hold out one's hands to the god of blight and cry: "Here, strike me! Cut away the avenues for dalliance! Give me a clear, straight course."

For that is what the handicap does: it gives one a clear, straight course; it deepens the main channel, and the hitherto scattered energies are driven into it. With your back wrenched, for instance, you can't race off on this tangent and that. You can do just a few things. And yet there is all that time—long, long hours of loneliness, and sometimes there is ache in them, and sometimes agony, and always longing—longing,

for life. "Oh, life!"—one cries—"Just to go free into life on any terms whatsoever!"

By and by one cries one's self out, like a heartsick little child—sobs off into something else; and if the gods are good, the something else catches up a ray of interest. Maybe it's embroidery, maybe designing, maybe a bit of whittling that turns into a figure—wood carving, or there's clay for modelling, and something may come of it, and sciences to be studied, any one of which could fill a lifetime, and inventions, and plans for houses. And always there are thoughts—deep, deep thoughts—and answers may come to riddles of life, and spiritual understanding—spiritual health that can do more to regenerate a household than all the physical health in the world. Maybe one is deaf, and an instrument to restore hearing may work out of it all. Or maybe one is blind, and pure ideals of living may picture themselves against the velvet curtain of night and somehow get themselves pictured on another canvas for the benefit of the blind, blind race of men. It matters so little what it is, if only it is the loose end of something that leads on to light, to good daily living, to worth-while achievement: a loose end that one may catch hold of and, holding fast, follow on through.

And so amazingly often, we learn in the an-

nals of the brave, one does follow through. One can do nothing else: vegetate or follow through. There is all that time, you see, and nothing else to put into it. One may tire of the new interest, turn from it and watch the clouds for a while, or the smoke curling up from chimneys, or dust specks in a sunbeam, or a spider's way with a captive fly, but eventually one turns back and picks up the loose end again, because there is nothing else to do. If one could run about after all the things that beckon, you see, one might never pick it up again, but one can't —and one does. The thing is taken up again and again, till by and by it begins to have power in it, to show growth. Then comes a time when one finds one is not holding fast to a loose end any more, but it is holding fast to him. It has got him in its grip; it owns him—makes him forget self, forget pain—and his life shines with a reflected glory. He is no longer that broken thing lying there, he is this other spinning thing, and at the same time he is this thing that he is spinning. And there is earth's supremest joy—for he is winning out.

Oh, one gets power when stricken out of the mass: it isn't all loss. One gets, greatest of all boons, the privilege of loneliness. Many handicapped people who fail to lose themselves in a

consuming work feel that they have too much loneliness, and no doubt they have. Life must be fed with life, but tragic as this is, it is nothing to the tragedy of a life overfilled with people and things. Lives, like trees, to become great must have plenty of space; and trees, we must believe, do their best growing in the calm of their days. The wind gaily shakes the leaves, and the sun plays hide and seek among them, but there would be no growth if the wind played in them all the while: just now and then, enough for refreshment. In the long, still hours when one can only lie and think—provided one lifts above the details of that last operation and what the doctor and the nurse said, and turns to something besides self and symptoms—one has time to order one's thoughts, to get at the why of things. One has time for long, listening silences, when often a truth will flash in, just flash in out of space like a message over a wire, and leave one quivering up to God in exaltation—an experience more illuminating to life than a sight of all the wonders to which the soundest body in the world could carry one.

You escape, when stricken out of the mass, the mass mind, the mass urge, the mass habit. You escape the contagion of other minds; you escape the beaten track; you escape waste.

When the moments of comfortable, usable time are like diamonds to you, you do not fritter them away. Values get readjusted. So much that fretted life becomes trivial; so much that seemed trivial looms large. You have the use of all of yourself; you are not diluted. You need not be a mere tincture of something; you can become an extract. You dip into the deeper wave.

The thing, too, is retroactive. Often complete bodily restoration comes as a direct result of doing work one was humanly sure was impossible. A young woman with dislocated vertebræ undertook a job in a press-clipping bureau that kept her sitting at a frame all day, steadily lifting her arms, lifting her entire trunk with each upward movement. She fainted so often, the first few weeks, that she was docked almost her entire pay for absence from her frame. But she kept on with a do-or-die persistence, with the result that she was completely restored to soundness. Nothing magical about it; just the effect of forcing her body into a form of exercise that adjusted the vertebræ.

The hospitals record any number of cases where frail young women have become strong and robust from the training. The regular exercise, diet, duties—the mind fixed on others' woes—work their beneficent way in people who

have been too inactive for health. Invalids, unable to walk, have been roused by the shock of good news or bad to immediate use of limbs long consigned to inertness. This is perfectly scientific. The mind is freed of repressions and inhibitions, and the body responds to the other suggestion. An all-absorbing work often does the same thing for one. The thing you feature grows: feature your defect, and it will gain power with you; feature your work, and it will gain power over the defect.

About the time we entered the World War, a certain Western librarian was told by her physician that she had a cancer, but she had made all her arrangements to go to the front and personally see that the correct reading matter reached the boys.

"How long can I live?" she asked.

The doctor gave her a year.

She took her year and went to the front with it, and did the noblest order of work before she went grandly out of life, leaving a path shining like a silver wake at sea. . . .

When President Harper of Chicago University, in the midst of tremendous industry, was told he had a malady that would give him but two more years to live, he turned quietly to his desk and made careful selection from his unfin-

ished work of that which he deemed most important, then embedded his waning fires in it to the last spark. . . .

Well, we all have but a limited time to live. The Great Physician has not told us the hour or the day of our going, but it will come soon for the longest-lived of us, as time is counted. What better can any of us do than to take serious stock of our activities, earnestly probe them for vitality, for real human usefulness, then, brushing aside waste, carry on with only that which is worth while?

Many a home woman spends energy on dozens of things that project her no whit on the way she secretly wishes to go. She would love a well-ordered house, but she can't have it and do all the other things expected of her, so the house has to go. She would love carefully trained, groomed, and taught children, but she can't have them and also have time for outside things, so the children just run along. She attempts more than any civilized woman on earth, and all too often with the result that her day is one steady rush from morning till night.

When it's all summed up, what does it amount to? She has just kept up, that is all. Kept up with what? Why, with someone else who is

racing to keep up with someone else. Like milling cattle, all going, just going, why or whither they know not; but someone started it, and no one stops it, and what are you going to do about it?

Now, I ask you, is this living in a way to recommend itself to the high gods? Nerves jar on nerves, minds jar on minds, personalities jar on personalities, and we have hysteria and mental sickness and waste. High-strung, sensitive temperaments snap under the tension. The race is not to the swift these days, but to the phlegmatic, to the unimaginative, to the material-minded. What was the old nursery rhyme? "How'd she die? She died doing this."

Oh, it is all wrong! Quiet space, deep stillness, simplicity of plan, and the mind constructively at work: that is your true laboratory. The greatest need in America to-day is a chance at space. Houses are too full of things; too many people hurry about in them; too many kinds of food are eaten; too many kinds of clothes are worn; too many kinds of activity are attempted. There's too much rubbing elbows.

Every human being should have a quiet spot off to himself, his own personal sanctuary, a place to run away to when the world gets too

thick about him. Many men get an approach to this in their offices or workshops. A woman rarely gets it. But we all need it. I love best to think of Christ alone in his nice, clean-smelling carpenter shop with the new shavings falling and his thoughts undisturbed. Perhaps the reason engineers figure so constructively in our world's chaos is that their time is partly spent in the lonely places. Great souls, unafraid, come out of solitude.

No, God never meant us to live all of a heap. He made the earth large with bait everywhere. He gave us curiosity to send us peering into all the unknown places. He made it plain by every sign that while we were to work in unity—in harmony toward the one great end of development—we were to work as individuals, *each from his own centre out.* To know ourselves—to know what lies within—we must have space, space in which to think, and plan, and listen; space all alone, uninvaded by any other human being. We can't all run off to the desert; we can't all have even a den to ourselves, more's the pity! But we can accept this as the ideal toward which to strive, and we can hold our time inviolate save for worthwhile things—things that project real development; and we can refuse the thousand and one frittering activities.

And neither let us take it too hard when we are given a chance at time and space through the medium of physical blight, for this may be one of the occasions when that which we consider our worst enemy becomes our best friend.

XI

SELF-BOUND

IT WAS four in the morning, and life was already busy on the ranch: a singing near the ground told of stretching and ripening in grain- and cornfields; the racing waters of a mountain torrent told of the eternally thirsty soil to which it eternally ministered; a lowing came from pasture bars where patient cows waited; a sound from the kitchen—a young girl's laugh among the pots and pans of breakfast getting—a boy's whistle among the milk pans—an older man's sally, "Wish't some fellow'd come along that'd go out and get us a deer"—a sudden cessation of the whistle—"Say, any time you want a deer——"

I slipped out of my bed, out under the trees, ashamed to be at rest on this great mountain ranch while all the world about me was astir. Everywhere I found life busy. Cows in lush grass mothering calves, sows snuffing about in the alfalfa among their squealing pigs, whinnying mares in the pasture with their colts racing and

kicking up their heels, blades of grass pushing up through the earth, vines yielding their fruit and flowers their fragrance—life everywhere, through bud and blossom, fruitage and young, giving, giving, giving, to feed more life, to preserve more life, to carry on more life. And everywhere beauty, beauty flooding up and spilling over into the arms of a rapturous earth—in all nature not one raucous sound, not one ugly sight, not one selfish motive.

Suddenly I felt sorry for man, wobbling around on the earth with a brain for ever seeking out curious inventions for the way life should be lived. How much more simple to be a spear of wheat with one clear call . . . and then it came to me: How plain, after all, is the plan the Creator set going, as much as to say: "Here is the world as it should move along right up to man. All he has to do is to take hold of it and go ahead on the same general idea."

And it burst on me thunderously: Why, with all our questionings—and questings—and searching the stars—and Mars—searching for the secret of life, in laboratories, in philosophies, in psychologies, trying to chase it down, so to speak, with it ever eluding us, like a bit of mercury—here it has been all the time, clear as day before our eyes, the way definitely marked out.

We have only to live for life's sake, giving back to life abundantly of what is in us to give—putting back into the golden granary in full measure for what we take out, knowing only that as we withhold are we stunted and the granary is impoverished. Even as with the fields, as we give, we fulfill our destiny and the granary is replenished—even as they.

How simple, and how plainly written! And yet—and yet—what do we see in this groping world of ours?

An unhappy-minded young woman who had but recently returned from extensive foreign travel following her college course, both supplied through the minted energy of others, sent for me to come to see the pictures she had brought back. I love pictures. Eagerly I went. There they were, hundreds of them: Herself on an English lawn drinking tea; Herself in tweeds on Scotch links; Herself with a background of Holland's windmills; Herself on the Rhine; Herself on French battlefields; in some instances she had to assure me that mountains or sea or battlefields were also there, just beyond, Herself so filled the picture.

I sat studying her. By all the usual tests she had been well educated, and she had a good mind. And yet she had brought back from her

free adventuring in the wide world just exactly what she had taken away—Herself. All the sights and sounds, the vastness of the earth's deeps, the dim distances, the towering heights, the flowering nations, the crumbling ruins, the peoples of many modes and customs with their tremendous, unsolved problems—all had made but a new temporary background for the Self that she carried about with her, and which, like an uneasy ghost, rose up between her and everything else. And she confided, querulously, that travel had been much overrated, that she had early wearied of it and wished herself back in her old familiar haunts, though now that she was here, she couldn't see why she had come, as there didn't seem to be a thing to do. And with that she dug out one more photograph and added, with a laugh, "Here I am, just arriving at home again." It was a picture of Herself, stepping off the train at the home station, mostly Herself, very little train, very little station.

Not a single compensatory impulse, not a thought for what she should begin to put back for all that she had taken out—kindergarten furnished her, grade schools, high school, college, travel. No wonder she was already bored, weary of life, for Self is the narrowest of countries, and its boundaries are soon reached.

A great-hearted widower felt so sorry for his motherless little daughter that he had no thought but to make her happy. A much-petted baby, she grew into a much-petted young woman, protected from every possible encroachment on her own design for her own life. Instead of all this thoughtfulness creating in her a like mind, it worked just the opposite. Every avenue of her nature that led out seemed to close. She developed the extreme form of the malady, that in-wrapt, self-absorbed, self-pitying nature that sees all the world as it revolves about herself alone. The sole centre of the universe for her father, she actually got the idea that she *was* the sole centre of the universe. She married, bore children, lost her father, her husband, most of her income, and was brought face to face with life's most vexing problems. This is one of the kindly provisions that we can pretty generally count on, the tumbling back to earth of these monuments of selfishness where the spirit may have a chance at growth before the veil drops. Life is very kind, if we only see it aright, and gives us many chances at redemption. But this woman closed her ears to life's hint, going right on with the illusion that she was the all-important one, getting the belief over to her children that nothing greatly mattered

if only she were prevented from suffering too keenly from changed circumstances. It seems to be a form of hypnosis, for you'll see not only children, but reasonable-minded adults yielding to the same superiority complex in others in no way superior. These children became small servants for their mother, fetching and carrying for her, meeting the disagreeable problems, taking the brunt of things. And all the time she never lifted her eyes from a contemplation of her own sorry plight to their young lives, denied all that youth craved.

And then life gave her another hint. As her children grew up, and went into other homes, and saw the respect and consideration shown other children, their eyes opened to the wrong of their mother's total oblivion of their problems. Disillusionment followed—blame, fault-finding—all the unpleasantness of ruffled spirits awakening to a sense of old wrongs and the powerlessness to eradicate their effect. And still this mother closed her ears to life's hint, thinking only that she was being further ill-treated by what she termed their "fussing."

So life gave her still another hint. Her children, having always been ignored, were timid, shrinking, afraid to forge ahead. Having had no value put on them at home, they could not read-

ily place a value there when they went out into the world. And thus they were not able to achieve what their native qualities might have achieved for them otherwise. Oh, there is an advantage that the properly valued child has. He believes in himself. He exacts his place in the sun. And so this mother had to suffer in her pride, for she saw other children, less endowed, winning far more desirable berths. But the trouble did not end there. The poison bred by a Self-life never goes out in one generation. When her daughters married and in turn became mothers, they were set in just one resolution, that their children should never suffer as they had. And so they became little more than servants to their own, catering to them continually, giving them no sense of duty to their parents, no compensatory attitude toward life, breeding all over again, much multiplied, the same self-centredness that had made such havoc of their own youth. Thus does the pendulum swing from extreme to extreme, generation by generation, and thus is a semblance of balance preserved in the race—but, oh, the unnecessary heartache and bitterness for individuals all along the line!

I actually heard a mother say, "I intend to teach my children to be selfish, for I was al-

ways unselfish, and I always got the worst of it!"—Not realizing that only innate selfishness—whatever the surface appearance—could contemplate with any satisfaction whatever the rewards of selfishness.

A ship struck rocks and was sinking: a great metropolitan newspaper offered a month's vacation and a substantial bonus to the reporter who would reach the life-saving boats and get the story. A cub reporter made it, and on his return to the office was so wildly excited over his beat that he could scarcely give the details.

"How perfectly horrible!" exclaimed a listener. "That splendid ship and so many people —lost!"

"Yes," gulped the youth, "but look what it did for me!"

Haven't we heard an echo of this same spirit from far older spectators of life's crucial crises?

It is easier to overlook self-centredness in young people, however, as one can always entertain the hope that life's deeper experiences may bring the true flower of understanding into bloom. In fact, there is a careless, unthinking hard sort of selfishness in much youth that can be classed with children's diseases, as a peculiarity of the age, unlovely and disappointing, but not necessarily incurable. "I didn't think," ex-

plains a great deal of it, and there is always the possibility that with maturity they may learn to think. It is this other that makes distress in the world, this complete absorption of the older person in Self: this person whom nothing affects unless it affects *It;* nothing hurts unless it hurts *It;* nothing touches unless it touches *It.* People we find it so difficult to love, for it is one of Nature's laws that in proportion as one loves himself does he fail to win the love of others. He seems to be attending to the job, so Nature leaves him to it. Some people seem born with this myopia of Self, just as others are born with myopic eyes and can see only that which is very close to them. The mind, designed for the outward, visioned view, is turned like a reversed telescope back in on itself. It never seems actually to see other people, to visualize their problems. It is as if problems did not exist save as they touch this enthroned Self. Naturally, working in so limited an area, the mind, designed for free range and far vision, becomes cramped, tires, sours, and breeds discontent which leads ofttimes to unbalance, to melancholia. Insane asylums are filled with people to-day who started—or their parents or grandparents started—with being merely Self-centred. With the Life-centred, woes break on their

shores with scarcely more disaster to them than when they break on another's; with the Self-centred, they are overwhelming.

"I just must live," insists the Life-centred, "there is so much that I can do."

"I just can't live," moans the Self-centred, "there is too much for me to do."

A human being has a difficult time at best getting adjusted to life. With a baby bear, his mother cuffs him up a tree and otherwise turns him into a regular, competitive bear where he must take life on a level with other bears. With baby birds, the mother early teaches them to fly, to look for worms, and then pretty soon they are all just birds together on an equal footing, none with special privileges. But with the human baby, from the very beginning he is the centre of attention. He owns the house. His smile is watched for. His laugh is rollicked out of him. His cry brings instant attention. It isn't long till "Look at me!" "Look at me!" becomes his watchword—with plenty to look. If he is ever, in his deep inner consciousness, to reverse his position, get himself away from the centre and on to the outer rim, he must have the steady help of suggestion, direction, and early habit. He must be led to practise unselfishness in small daily acts and words, just as definitely

as a prospective musician must practise his scales or an artist his drawing. Just as definitely as he must practise decent table manners—if he is ever to have them. He must be required from the earliest possible moment to *compensate for the energy he burns up in others.*

The happiest baby I ever knew was a little chap who had been alone with his young mother a great deal, and she treated him more as a little chum than as her baby. At eighteen months he gathered up his own clothes in the morning and brought them to her to have them put on; brought her slippers and house dress; and later, when she would be preparing breakfast, he would be putting cups on the table. He must help at every operation. True, he broke dishes, but this loss was as nothing to the gain of his early-established habit of coöperation. When she brought in an armful of wood, he came toddling after with his stick. When she hung clothes on the line, he must stand at her side reaching them up to her. There wasn't a job that she undertook that he didn't want his part in. A less far-seeing mother, of course, will not be bothered by a baby under her feet every minute. She will put him off somewhere, at play with his own toys, in his own world, and get on more rapidly with her housework. But

she would get on more rapidly toward the ultimate end of all mothers—the building of character—by the other method. "Get out of my kitchen!" a mother will exclaim to her growing daughters, not wanting their inefficiency and deliberation. She would rather do all the work herself than be bothered. And she does all the work herself, and her daughters never get the habit of making steady contribution to the activity that supports them.

Several summers ago, at a mountain resort, I heard a mother say so often to her little daughter, "Think of others!" that it seemed to me she rather overdid the thing. The child couldn't open a box of candy, or bring out her toys, or pick up her racket to run to the tennis court that there didn't come that low-toned admonition. And the child—somewhat perfunctorily at times, I will admit, for she was a normal child, would turn and offer other children her candy—her toys, first chance at the tennis court. Recently I met her in town with a group of her young friends, now all of the "flapper" age. I proposed a matinée.

"Where shall we go?" I asked.

They all responded, one suggesting this play, one that—all but my little friend of the mountains, who met the suggestion just as eagerly,

but what she said was, "Which one would *you* like best to see?"

The only one of the group with whom to think of others had become automatic. And I thought, no, the mother had not overdone the thing, for there was the product, a fresh, beautiful young girl—as all the others were beautiful with youth and buoyancy—but with an added grace, a shade of superiority, of fineness, that warmed one's heart to her at once. The mother could not so softly have paved the way of her child's future had she left her a million dollars.

It would be interesting to call "Hands up!" in every American home where there is that daily admonition—or its equivalent—to little children now forming the habits of thought and action that will be automatic with them all the rest of their days, "Think of others!"

We hear strange forms of speech, forms that subtly cultivate the Self-motive, from mothers who have the best motives in the world, but are not analytical-minded.

"Ask God to make you good, so you can go to Heaven when you die," says a mother to her little son at her knee each night.

How much better to say, "Ask God to make you good, little son, because a good child is

like one of His beautiful flowers, and a naughty one is like a prickly thistle . . . you don't want to be a prickly thistle, stinging everyone."

Rewards and punishments—how they have led us into the Self-motive! How we have made the Self-motive the dominating one, even in our supposedly ethical teaching! The reward, ever the reward, for right conduct; the penalty for wrong. How much better to instil an appreciation of the beauty of a life lived according to the eternal laws, the futility of a life lived in rebellion against them.

Everyone loves a hero, which is evidence that the germ of a potential hero is enfolded within every one of us, but for every mortal since the world began who has given his life in sudden, heroic thought for others, lives upon lives have been patiently and gloriously lived through in day-by-day and hour-by-hour thought for others, making character as sands are made, as coral builds. In their actual value to the long, slow upbuilding of the race, dramatic offerings of the moment are to the offerings of these others as fountains that catch rainbows to the deep underground stream that feeds them. And we can all give ourselves in this more difficult way, the way that adds golden kernels, grain by grain, to

God's great granary, the way that carries on God's purpose which "sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal, and awakens in man"—the way that leads from the Self-Life, out to Life Universal.

XII

THE HAPPY WAYS

Manners are the happy ways of doing things: each one a stroke of genius or of love—now repeated and hardened into usage.—EMERSON.

ONLY the gods can give you a manner, but you can give yourself good manners: and of all the self-gifts in the power of your bestowing none other will carry you through life on such well-oiled wheels; none other will come so near making up for any deficiencies with which unkind Nature may have handicapped you. Everyone turns to gaze upon a beautiful face, but let the lips of the beautiful one open in raucous crudity, and the gazing faces will turn away and go on to happier scenes. But let the face be ever so plain, if the manners are refined and beautiful, there people will flock, and the plain face will never drive them away.

The famous favourites of history have never been merely beautiful women; some have been anything but beautiful. Always it has been the charm of the manner and the manners that held.

How many girls would love to dash gaily into a stiff, ill-conditioned party of young people and spread out the good will they actually feel like rays from the sun for all to warm themselves by, but they were not practised in the art while growing up, and so the kindness stops at the portals of desire. Once hardened in the other way, the repressed, reticent way, it becomes almost impossible to break the barrier between the will to do and the power to do. The most reserve-bound person performs wonderful acts of graciousness in his mind, but he cannot translate them into deeds. A charming philosopher woman who always made allowances for everyone, no matter what was said or done, explained it this way, and I think it's a fine thing to remember. She said: "I know I am lots nicer inside than out, that I think lots nicer things than I say, and have dreams and visions and aspirations of which nothing is ever hinted to the rest of the world, so why shouldn't it be the same with everyone else? I take it for granted that it is."

Fine manners are melody, graciousness is song, and some must for ever be mute, singing only in their hearts. For to be natural and spontaneous, fine manners must be acquired young, and at home. Then they will harden into habit, and

they will extend out not only into social life as represented by the word "society," but into all other human relationships. It is difficult to make good manners move from the outside in —from the world at large into the home— but it is the most natural thing on earth for them to move from the inside out—from the home out into the larger world. What a charming thing —and what a moral thing, for the self-control engendered is priceless—to see a family that has been trained to this habit in their daily intercourse, a family in which the members take no more objectionable liberties with one another than with strangers, where the small courtesies are practised, where every special attention that a guest could inspire is paid the father, the mother, and the children, while the gracious responses flower as do the attentions! I heard a man say in explanation of his own social lacks, "We never had any company at our house, so of course we had no chance to learn manners." As if manners were a company affair!

Lack of good manners goes all the way through and blights at every touch, just as good manners go all the way through and bless at every touch. The motor-hog with his accidents and killings is really only an exaggerated case of bad manners—he was never taught to think of others

first and show that he did. The sprawled person in a street car in dull oblivion of using up more than his share of space, the seat retained while a lady or an older person stands, the seat accepted without the courtesy of a smiling "thank you," the nice conductor who helps the old lady off—and the old lady who accepts it as the winds from heaven, as a matter of course, without pleasing acknowledgment, the impatient word to the salesgirl, the salesgirl's stony, gum-chewing indifference to the troubled customer's quest, the cranky insistence over the telephone, the hasty blame to a delivery man—all these are but the outcroppings into the busy world from homes where "manners" have not been taught, where graciousness toward others has not been the keynote.

The realization that those who serve in street cars, behind counters, over telephone wires, in restaurants and hotels are *human beings*, not automatons, human beings with nerves and sensibilities, might go far toward smoothing out friction and easing a rapidly growing resentment of class against class. And the realization among those who serve in the public machinery of life that those who come in to buy, to look, to pay bills, to eat, to use a telephone, are human, too—even though they come in their limousines

—and are often carrying a load beneath that exterior of well-being, a staggering load of grief, or tragedy, or despair, or hopelessness in some special quarter, are often at the breaking point of tension where a pleasant word, a human touch of understanding, an impulsive kindness would ease the pain—if they could but realize this—visualize the possibilities in every other life—how they might help smooth the way! The realization that an insolent manner toward one whom you consider an inferior instantly turns the tables and makes you the inferior in the case might bring pause. But are our young people universally taught these simple lessons? The answer is open to the world to-day, in what we see and hear as we go about in it.

A woman confessed to me that though married to a "good" man who had never broken any of the obvious moral laws, her life had been one long nightmare; and what do you suppose was the grinding irritation of daily life with him that had produced a veritable boil in her marital existence, sending sensitiveness and soreness through and through her whole being? Well, he ate with his knife—ladled his food in with it. She had tried her best to break him of it, but he had been adamant to all suggestions, hardening himself in the habit with a curious sort of obsti-

nacy in which insensitive natures often clothe themselves at the first suggestion of change or improvement. He didn't regard it as a cardinal sin, and so he refused to be influenced. As the advancing years gave them prosperity and freedom to travel, she was steadily more mortified, among strangers, over this hold-over out of an untaught childhood. But he went to his death —long after her—still eating with his knife, and complacently sure that he had always been a good Christian man and a good husband.

There are other common domestic annoyances: the manner of entering a room loudly, with commotion; the failure to rise when elders enter—or with men and boys, when women arrive; the big, awkward man's way of sprawling his legs out for everyone to walk around or trip over; yawning and stretching noisily, talking through a yawn; reading aloud without asking permission right into everyone else's absorption in his own book; scratching, sniffling, thrumming—the thousand and one little domestic pests of bad manners that often are kept in leash when there is "company," but are given full freedom in the bosom of the family.

Then there is the way of using a pocket handkerchief. I am amazed at the number of times I see women of education—college women from

good homes—pull out a handkerchief and blow loudly into it as though no one had ever told them—and they had not thought about it themselves—that this is a purely private operation to be carried on as unostentatiously as possible. I see men daily, professional men, coming down the street with toothpicks between their lips, men who are making a real contribution to their generation but were never taught at home—and have never observed for themselves—that gentlemen do not do such things. But why go on? American crimes against good manners in the lesser things are as the drops of the ocean, and each of us has only to observe to form a list that will reach to the moon!

We are charged by Europeans with obviousness, with lacking subtlety. We pride ourselves on being open, frank, and candid, but there is a graciousness of manner growing out of graciousness of thought and feeling that we could cultivate much to our advantage, without adopting the insincerity that is sometimes chargeable to the Europeans' account. For instance, is it really necessary, in order to be open, frank, and candid, to turn and stare at people on the street who have physical defects? The recent war brought this American habit home to all of us, I am sure. It was impossible to go on the street

with a maimed boy from the trenches without the eyes of passers-by staring all the way, the heads turning for further gazing like wheat blown in the wind. I repeatedly had the experience of taking to the theatre in New York a boy who had lost both legs and propelled himself on a little platform. All along Broadway people stared. The boy's hospital-bleached face grew redder and redder as we progressed, and though a show could take his mind off his troubles better than anything else—it was the one real pleasure left him—he gave up going rather than endure the cruel stares.

It wasn't just that he was a soldier on Broadway. I had the same experience with an older man who had lost several fingers from his right hand in a Fourth of July explosion. I would go with him to dine in the most expensive grills, and invariably people all about at the neighbouring tables would stare and nudge one another, and even whisper, "Look!" Which only shows that bad manners accompany diamonds and dinner coats quite as frequently as they do overalls and dinner pails. Lafcadio Hearn lived out his life in Japan because of a defective eye. There alone, after travelling all over the world, he found a people who averted the gaze automatically, never staring at a defect.

In South American countries the crude manners of our business men militate steadily against them; the gentler-mannered Latin races do not understand our bluntness. All the trade agreements in the world would not bring the two Americas together as would a course in good manners taken and applied by our travelling men.

And right here we get down to the base of the whole matter: Japanese manners are as they are because the Japanese have recognized the beauty and power in fine manners, even as they have in individual flowers and trees and birds and bits of rugged coast-line. They have standardized fine manners, and they teach fine manners to their children from their infancy. It is the same with the Latins. While our manners are as they are because we have not had a standard; we have not been taught. We haven't had mothers who universally had good manners of their own, or who were gifted with the ability to impress them into the lives and habits of their growing children. We haven't had schools that stress their importance. We now say, let the teachers instruct the children—but who taught the teachers? Are the manners of those who can get the highest marks in an examination to be depended on? Rarely, I think! Can they

teach what they do not know or rarely practise? Books? There are a few books on social etiquette, as though "company behaviour" were the whole of it. Then we have our "finishing schools" where fortunate daughters are sent to be polished off, but the proportion that has the opportunity to attend such schools is small; it does not supply sufficient leaven to leaven the whole loaf. And besides, fine manners are not a matter of finish, of veneer; to be effective, they must go into the grain.

The result is that we have a people much cruder in manner than in sentiment, a people who—save those from the finest flower of the old South and the best culture of the farthest East—generally put the worst foot foremost. We have everywhere over our broad land wives who are all their lives harassed by the ill-mannerly, blunt, or boorish ways of otherwise excellent husbands. We have girls who turn away from what might otherwise have proved happy unions, because of the unpleasant personal habits of men who were not taught in their homes the smaller niceties—men who sprawl, and gulp, and blow, and snort, and wear their hats when they shouldn't, and irritate generally. We have splendid girls of fine character and good heart who fail socially because they are

awkward and ill at ease from lack of exact knowledge as to how to conduct themselves. We have dear, lovely girls marrying perfect scalawags because of their fine manners—fine manners were all they did have, and supplied a cloak for all their other imperfections. Had these girls been accustomed to fine manners from their own fathers and brothers, these scalawags would not have been so strong a lure. And we have girls marrying to get away from humiliation over the crude ways of their parents. Everywhere, all over our country, we have endurance tests in domesticity because some mother failed to harden the little, new life put into her keeping into the "happy ways."

Some of the best women in the world—with qualities valuable to the race—are not adapted to bringing up children. They are not instinctive mothers. Not being highly socialized, they are not keen human observers. There is the student type, the woman all wrapped up in her studies, living the days in between meetings, and lectures on a sort of treadmill plan. I have seen a mother of this type sit at her own table holding forth on Chinese porcelains or Moravian customs, oblivious of everything going on about her, while one child gulped noisily from his own bit of "porcelain," another saved time by in-

jecting an entire roll into his mouth at one bite, almost choking himself to death in the process, and another mopped up bread and gravy, spilling half of every mouthful back again into his plate —home "customs" that the mother didn't even see. And I have seen another mother who didn't even know China had porcelains or that Moravian customs differed from any other, giving such close attention to her children's table manners that no first act of crudeness could be repeated and formed into a habit.

Sensitive children from such mothers as the former suffer the keenest torture when they first go away among strangers, for they receive harsh criticism and hard knocks and stony ignorings; they are slighted and left out of things, and at first they don't know why. And even when they do, it isn't easy to change a lifetime habit overnight. A certain girl was kept out of sororities—though one of the cleverest girls in her studies who ever enrolled in that college—because she tipped her soup plate and lapped up the last drop. She would rather have been a member of a sorority than have title to all the soup in the world, but she defeated her chances utterly by her bad table manners. Children from the latter type of mother go away among strangers, everywhere in the larger world, and

are beautifully received, having no tragic sorrows of a social kind. Such girls are instantly recognized as well bred; other mothers want them for their daughters' companions, for their sons' wives; they pave their own way as they go. Children from the former type of mother—though better educated—have to move on a plane lower down. Manners rule or ruin. There is no getting away from that.

All these niceties of behaviour have to be taught in detail, act by act. "Behave!" an exasperated mother will exclaim, but this tells the child nothing. She can't realize that this new little life comes to her knowing nothing, and that in the end he will just about be the sum of her teaching. And to be useful in preventing his escape from social destruction, the teaching must be explicit.

Little children, save in rare instances of unusual social gifts, are all about alike. The difference in manners found in the same social levels is almost altogether a difference in mothers. One mother begins leading her baby into ways of showing affection and appreciation for courtesies from the very beginning of manifestation of intelligence. "Wasn't Daddy lovely to bring you the pretty card!" said a mother of an ordinary little advertisement card the baby

was showing her. The card had no value, but the thought prompted by the incident was priceless. "Daddy's the best in the world," I heard a mother crooning to her baby as she rocked her and the baby lips took up the refrain after her, "Daddy's the bes' in the worl'," going off into dreamland with the gracious sentiment on her tongue and in her heart. It is no more "natural" for a baby so taught to express her love in charming phrases and acts than it is for the untaught baby across the street, but as time goes on, through earliest habit, such expressions will become second nature, and as her circle widens, her graciousness will carry to all. Everyone will say, "Such a sweet, responsive child!" when they should say, "Such a painstaking mother!"

I know a baby of four who draws his mother's chair out for her. His is a simple, unpretentious home where the babies eat their dinner with the grown-ups, but he eats like a little gentleman and acts like one—and is one. He has been drilled in such social niceties as come naturally into his little life, until already they are automatic. And what is the drawing out of a chair at the dinner table but a natural act of kindness and courtesy "hardened into usage"? We get the habit of doing a courteous thing, and we call it correct usage, but after all it is only kindness let

out of bondage. All his life that little boy will draw out the chair for the woman with whom he is dining, while another, just as good at heart, would feel it an affectation, merely because he had not been habituated to it in his childhood.

Once in a while, of course, there is a good-manners prodigy, just as there is a musical prodigy, or a chess prodigy—as if all of one quality that had ever existed in his ancestors had some way collected like gold in a pocket of the earth, to be transmitted direct to this one little vehicle; a child who shoots straight into the world through an ordinary environment, with just the nicest, most charming ways. His road through life—barring accidents—is always a highway well paved. He goes from success to success socially, just as do the other prodigies in their particular lines. He learns from the rest of the world all he is not taught at home; to see a more pleasing way is to adopt it. But with the average child the "happy ways" must be hardened into daily usage, or he will never get them. He is like concrete, which, when poured into a mould, is unchangeable after it sets. If this is the mother's particular "blind spot"—we all have one, so she need not be sensitive about it—if she is not observing, not adapted to forming her child's manners, then she should hire

another to do it, just as she would engage a musician to teach him music. Good manners are too vital a part of one's equipment to be neglected merely because a mother cannot give the training.

Our ways of doing all the everyday things, from the moment we begin a day till its close, our entrances and exits, our manner of sitting, rising, speaking, walking, talking, meeting friends, giving orders, doing business, entertaining and being entertained, going here and there about the earth, form the exterior which is all most people ever get of us. There may be pure gold deep down inside, but we can't ask the busy world to stop and mine us to find it out. The evidences of its being there had better come to the surface in the "happy ways" if we want to be appreciated, to get the most out of living, and to give the most. We owe it to ourselves —and those with whom we travel—to be a pleasure person. Some of the most worthy people in the world go unloved and unappreciated to their graves because of their bad manners. Let us begin to remedy this defect in our national life, and let us begin the remedy where we begin the defect—in the home.

XIII

ACCIDENTS OF IMPERFECTION

THE sea was pounding madly against a wide gray Washington beach, and I was pacing more madly still. I thought, it is well my friends did not come. I was in no mood to try to be nice. One who had been very dear had wounded me deeply, unforgivably. I could not overlook it and go on, and I could not contemplate the future cheerfully without her in it—in most ways so truly companionable, so steadily an inspiration, so happily a habit in my life. But this offence could not be condoned; my own dignity would not let me condone it, my own self-respect. Why, she was always doing something like that! The strangest thing! Such a *knowing* person about some things, such a dense one about others. Well, this ended it.

I could stand the sea no longer and went into the cottage. A friend had lent it to me for September, that beach-exodus month, so I had it and the ocean to myself. A fire roared on the hearth. Through the sea-looking windows I

watched gulls paddling in the gray edge of the receding water. I turned away from the unfriendly vastness to the fire. A fire is a friendly thing—when one has a companion. . . . I turned away from the fire and pulled an old bound volume of *Scribner's* from a bookshelf, meaning to lose myself in one of the good, old-time "continued" stories. Opening it, these words met my eyes:

"Love is—and ought to be—blind—that it may have the heavenly sight unmarred by the accidents of human imperfection."

I don't know who said it—I didn't care, for instantly everything cheered up. It gave me a working code, a plan to go by, an understanding through which to operate, and overlook, and forgive, and keep my self-respect—and my friend.

"The heavenly sight unmarred by the accidents of human imperfection"—why, that was the whole of it, the whole of maintaining one's equilibrium in social relationships. Deep down underneath everything I knew my friend was true and loyal. I knew that the incident which had so inflamed me did not represent the big main current of her life, the steady flow of her fine, high spirit. It was merely "an accident of imperfection."

Blithely now, even laughing at my recent

tragic mind, I got into a sweater and went for a brisk walk along the deserted beach. The sea roared and piled high its waves, and I raced joyously out of their reach. Now a bit of an old, battered wreck would be washed up, now a dead and ill-smelling skate, now a soft, decaying starfish—"accidents of imperfection," I told myself, playing the game, as I moved past them and went on—and all out of the same glorious old ocean that fills the air with such stimulating salt spray, that rolls up in such spanking waves, that curls the edges of its great gray slaps of water with such a delightfully frilly and foamy and rainbow-hued and sparkling finish. Shall we abandon the ocean because of the dead skates it sometimes throws at our feet?

The trouble we have in our human relationships arises form the necessity of getting on with people who never, in a single, solitary instance, see from our exact point of view. We are like so many prisms through which God's lights and colours shine, but they for ever shine differently: there are variations in the cutting, and there are mars that deflect. One can imagine one prism—with its mar under cover—saying to another, "I'd be ashamed to deflect pure rays so!" But just wait, old prism, till you are turned so the light shines through your special bit of

marring, and see if you don't do some rare deflecting of your own!

I remember in my childhood going to make a week-end visit in a home noted for being the cleanest house in town. It was said by other housekeepers that you could run a pocket-handkerchief over the top of Mrs. C.'s highest door-jamb and not raise a speck of dust. Apparently they had tried it. I was duly warned to mind my p's and q's, for in my own home dust was not among the capital offences. All day I carefully tiptoed in and out of the house, deeply concerned with leaving no track or trace. But imagine my amazement on awaking the next morning to hear one of the girls call downstairs, "Mamma, Mamma, what did you do with the toothbrush?" And to hear the mother's answer, "I didn't have it last, Ruby; Polly had it!"

And so it goes. A thing your life emphasizes is all but missed in another's; a matter your friend considers of vital importance is all but ignored by you. We are all intense about something, dust specks or toothbrushes, and through these individual intensities of ours the world at large loses its dust specks and acquires its toothbrushes, and progress is made. In our personal intercourse, however, we are apt to lose sight of

the working out of the broader plan and take our friends' defections too seriously, allowing the defect to fill our eyes to the exclusion of the thing of which it is only a small, imperfect part, with ultimate confusion and conflict.

A young woman in a rage with her fiancé for some apparently inexcusable oversight exclaimed, "I never can forgive him—never!"

Her grandmother, sitting near, looked up from her knitting. "I felt the same way one day nearly fifty years ago," she said quietly. "Today I cannot recall what it was I could not forgive, but the emptiness of life that resulted is still in my mind. Don't get hung up on a snag in the stream, my dear. Snags alone are not so dangerous—it's the débris that clings to them that makes the trouble. Pull yourself loose and go on."

Intolerance is the foe of happy human relationships, and intolerance is built on the *self* point of view. "I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing!" you will say. Well, perhaps you wouldn't. But you would do something else that beats it as badly as the family toothbrush beat the dust specks. You are you. That person is that person. You are making the mistake of looking at that person's defect from your point of view, fitting it on to yourself, like an-

other's hat, which may look hideous on you with your lines and curves and angles, but may not be so incongruous with another's make-up. You can't take a hat into your hand and say it is good or bad. You have to put it on the head and see how it tones in. So with a defect. When seen in relation to the entire life and inheritance of the person to whom it belongs, it may appear less glaring than when measured against your entire life and inheritance.

In our judgments we must first get rid of the eternal self: we must learn to look at the fault wholly in its relation to the person to whom it belongs, not in its relation to ourselves. None of us is created perfect, and few—if any—attain perfection. The most we can attain is a perfect understanding of this fact, and a self-control that will enable us to pull loose from the snag and go on with the main stream of the life which in other respects is in harmony with ours; not stay hung up, emphasizing the snag and giving it more weight than the stream itself. To be able to ignore is often the most saving of graces.

Nowhere is this understanding so important as in the domestic situation. Boys and girls, blinded with the glamour of young love, rush into marriage, and then, as the first rosy glow fades, they begin to see each other with the eyes

of the critic, and to find fault, to censure, and otherwise start the small fires of discord which are breaking out everywhere in America in unhappiness and disrupted unions. At no time in her history has America been so pulled loose from sectionalism and turned into one vast melting-pot as during the recent years, when boys from the West, stationed in the East and the South, have taken brides from their new locations, and vice versa. The effervescing, demonstrative nature of the South has had to try to harmonize with the more self-contained nature of the North. The breezy, hospitable, latch-string-always-out son of the West has had to learn the ways of the more conservative girl of the East. And these young people have not been thoroughly educated on the history of the different sections of America and their early settlement. They have not known what it is in ancestry and tradition that makes the difference. They have—in too many cases—known only to blame. And this blame—I must add—has appeared more in the girl than in the boy. It may be that he has had too much else to think of, in adjusting the economic problem, but far more often does the early fault-finding originate with her. She is for ever like a mother, this girl-bride, no matter how young you catch

her, for ever obsessed with how this young husband is going to appear to others, how he will "behave," as if he were her little boy. While the boy-husband is far more apt to be obsessed with the girl herself and not care a hang about what anybody else thinks. Thus we catch in asides from her—and I have caught them in dozens, always with such uneasiness in my mind, and such wanting to reach out and touch her hand, and say, "Don't, my dear!"—we catch such things as these:

"Jack," with a frown, pettishly, "why didn't you talk more at the dinner? You were dumb as an ox! They'll think you can't talk."

"Bored stiff!" another exclaimed, telling of her wedding trip East. "Just meeting relatives —old aunts and uncles and cousins, and stiff formal dinners, and being looked over and eyed and talked about. Why, Mother, Dan's people are so *tight!* All for themselves—not a bit of open house for anybody but relatives!"

"Well, do let up about your mother for five minutes anyhow!" from another to the dearest of boy-husbands who wanted to make sure she would love his mother, and to insure it, was singing her praises endlessly.

"But *I* want to dance, and you ought to want to dance when I do whether you do or not!"

In every case a little savage outburst, after what seemed to the bride ages of repression and endurance, when really she had not endured long enough to get the lay of the land and understand the situation at all.

Marriage is particularly hard for the girls of to-day, who have not been taught the spirit of submission which was supposed to control the ideal wife of an earlier period, and have been given little philosophy and human insight to take its place and help along with the splendid comradeship that has come to be the American ideal between husband and wife. The earlier wife—if a proper one—was self-effacing and self-sacrificing, smoothing over all the rough edges for everyone else at whatever cost to herself, but few to-day have majored in this branch of education. They have lived a rare life of independence, they want quick action, and things to go their way at once, and they have small consideration for the idea of patience and growth and the moulding of time.

Whenever I feel concerned about young wives, however, I always take refuge in Sally and hope there are loads of Sallys that I haven't found, to leaven the domestic loaf. I'd like to see all the young brides go to school to Sally. There is so little of preparation for life, so little of philosophy

taught our young people in the midst of all the marvellous efficiency they are being given for doing things, that it is hardly fair to expect them to harmonize a home as well as they run it. Domestic science is teaching them all about cooking, and making over, and household management, till the least competent of them can teach their grandmothers, but no *human* insight is given them into making a harmonious spirit brood over this home, the machinery of which they know so well how to keep oiled. The old-fashioned teaching of the elders—the teaching of patience, and mildness, and sweetness, and graciousness, and forgiveness—the teaching of all those good old-fashioned virtues seems gone with the old-fashioned grandmother in her lace cap with a little child at her knee learning to knit and learning so much else with the slow, time-serving lesson. The pendulum has swung far from all but practical efficiency, but it will swing back: and in the meantime—there is Sally.

I don't know what Sally is the product of, except that her family were always thinkers and theorists rather than doers. But she was a pretty girl, of the irregular-featured type, and charming socially; and she married Tom—blunt, practical, literal-minded, non-imaginative, a hound for the scent of business and for

every detail of physical comfort, but tiresome socially. On the honeymoon someone congratulated him on his beautiful wife.

"I never thought her beautiful," he said. "Her features are not perfect."

Tenseness, indignation, Sally's mother ready to burst with wrath—but out of the gathering storm came the bright voice of Sally, wiser than her generation, "Well, that's certainly the truth, and it isn't every woman who gets the truth from her own husband." The closest observer could not detect the lancet thrust. Again, he would interrupt her amusing, exaggerated recitals and proceed to tell the same thing in his own detailed, boresome way, as though she were some child not to be trusted with reporting the affair, but Sally would only laugh it off. Being athletically inclined—and Sally not being so—Tom insisted on dragging her along to skate, coast, ski, sail his boat, and drive his car. Of course, this was more of a compliment than had he sent her a bouquet of roses and gone off to play golf with his men friends, and, too, it was better for her health than her former way of holding fast to indoor sports, but still it seemed selfish to base their lives so entirely on his tastes.

Everyone expected the worst—and held their breath. For Sally had been a social favourite

and was accustomed to being catered to. But from the first she seemed to have worked out a code of ignoring what she did not like and absolutely refusing to be offended with anything her husband did. She seemed to regard each disturbing incident as a mere overflow of a trait not in itself objectionable, and to place it where it belonged in her valuations, letting it pass with the trivial attention that its triviality—in comparison with the good of the main current of his life—deserved.

Several years passed, and I saw Sally again. Tom's aggressiveness socially had softened. Business absorption had helped, of course. Sally had not lost her social charm, but she had put a foundation of serious-mindedness under it, and her voice was that of a happy woman, while the atmosphere of her home was pleasant in the extreme. Their children were attractive and well disciplined—Tom had seen to that—and even the grandmother was won over, singing his praises as the most thoughtful of sons-in-law. His intense attention to details, his genius for oversight, had made the whole family more comfortable in the world than they had ever been before. They were able to appreciate traits which they personally lacked and—like Sally—ignore those that grew out of his very virtues but were

not so agreeable socially. To this day—and these two have been married many years now—Sally has never said an unpleasant word to her husband, has never put herself in an unattractive mood before him, has never allowed his words or acts to react on her so as to upset her and make her appear badly. She has her code, and it gets her past the snags.

Then there is another outstanding case in the same small social circle—one of those life tragedies, a divorce. The married life of these two was considered model. The man was the lover type, addressing his wife as "sweetheart," continuing after marriage the small outward acts of devotion that had marked the courtship. But the wife—non-social, self-contained, and unresponsive, having grown up in a stiff, unsocial atmosphere—saw no "sense" in these ways of her husband. When the baby came, the father was beside himself with joy, hanging over the crib, clinging to its tiny fingers, going into ecstasies of delight with each new development. On one of its first airings, a business associate rushed up to the young mother with, "Do let me see that wonderful baby; we hear of nothing else all day at the office."

"Nothing wonderful about it—just an ordinary baby," said the mother, uncovering its face.

Now, she loved that baby as devotedly as did its father; but she had not the habit of effervescing, and she considered it foolish. She really meant to take it out of her husband, settle him into something more staid and humdrum, like the men of her own family.

One evening I was there when little Betty was about three. I was impressed with the way the father took charge of the child after dinner, undressing her and telling her sleepy-time stories. He was lively, interested, amused. Time came for him to go to some meeting. He got his hat, then turned back again to the baby.

"Kiss Daddy," he said, bending over her.

"Daddy, I did kiss you," she returned solemnly, holding back.

"Betty's like me—she doesn't see any sense in so much kissing," the mother commented as the father at last went out—without his kiss.

It disturbed me. There was an overflowing, effervescing, affectionate nature, and not a thing in his own household reaching out to meet it or receive it, not even his child, who, through inheritance, imitation, or both, was fashioning her prim little self after the mother's pattern.

Well, that was only a few years ago. They were divorced last month, and none of their happily married friends—whose husbands long

ago ceased calling them "sweetheart"—can understand it. "You never can tell," they say, with a sigh. But isn't there perhaps a way to tell? Each of these husbands was a good, average, well-intentioned young American, all potentiality when first married. The outcome of each marriage, it seems to me, measures the human understanding of the wives in the case. As housekeepers, economists, moralists, and idealists, they were substantially on a par, but in human understanding one scored high—and the other scored scarcely at all. And though your efficiencies stack to the stars, if you lack a penetrating understanding of human nature that tells you to stand everlastingly by your own, and self-control enough to make yourself do it in all kinds of moods and weathers, accepting on faith when there is no light, then all else in the endurance test of human companionship will prove as ashes in the wind.

This sort of failure is not confined to people in domestic relations: many people are a huge success in their professional, business, and scientific undertakings who are a total failure on the social side. They say they haven't the knack of getting on with people, some even priding themselves on it, taking it as a mark of intellectual superiority. But before settling too comfortably

into the niche of exclusiveness, bear in mind that abnormal-minded people will often do a definite piece of work exceptionally well, while dangerously near plunging a knife into the first human being who gets in the way. The attitude toward a piece of work may be sane and controlled—as with many excellent housekeepers—because the work yields steadily to the will of the worker, while the attitude toward human kind is prickly and irritable if not wholly destructive. The unbalanced mind cannot endure the opposing will. It might not be such a bad idea for each of us to test out our own degree of balance by this rule. If we could realize that our inability to harmonize with people generally suggests a delicate unbalance on our part, we might set about the task of righting ourselves instead of trying to make over our fellows, and with more satisfactory results.

We are as we are, and of course we cannot become wholly different; neither is it desirable that we should. But we can more or less modify our types the better to harmonize with others, and we can cultivate tolerance for points of difference, rather than scorn for them. What we term a defect may prove—if we patiently trace it—but an overflow of a virtue, a vent from the very engine that makes the whole machine go.

Too often, when you start out to blast away a defect by hammer blows—by scenes, quarrels, coldnesses, and avoidance—you succeed in eliminating the defect, but you eliminate with it a great deal besides that you are far from wishing to destroy. A friendship—even a love between a man and a woman—can be wholly quashed by attempts at reconstruction on too crude a plan.

It often seems—in marriage—that too great a proportion of the harmonizing is in the wife's hands, as though she alone were responsible for the happy outcome of the union. But when we analyse it, we must see that the woman is by nature the constructive member of the partnership. She is in the position of the factory that takes in raw materials and turns out the finished product—and some of it is pretty raw, I'll admit. But what is any life for a woman but a working over of raw materials? Suppose she goes into a schoolroom—all raw materials; an office—the same; a profession—becomes a doctor or a lawyer—what is she doing all day but patching up and making over? As for idle-minded women, such as become cogs and drones and parasites, we need not concern ourselves with them. But for real women there will for ever be the greater share of the responsibility for creating harmony—and *real* women will not resent it.

For we are all physicians, we women, physicians to the souls as well as the bodies of our intimate groups. To be wise physicians we must first be diagnosticians. When a thing is understood, the cure is half accomplished. But often we understand only part of the way, the problem is too hard, and then we misjudge and unnecessarily wound and are unnecessarily wounded. And then it is—when we cannot understand, when we cannot see through the thing—that it is time for us to close our physical eyes to the vexing tangle and open our spiritual eyes, keeping "the heavenly sight unmarred." A freshet, and what débris, what apparent destruction! But only a little time, and it is all swept away in the on-moving of Nature's course, and there is a clean, smooth stream flowing gently before us. Many things will right themselves if we give them time. Many things will do better if we keep our hands off. Let us, then, gamely, play the game, and not take the poor plays of others so personally or seriously, but be more concerned that we are playing our own part with all the skill that is in us. Let us be able to say, with each defect which we cannot readily eliminate: "It's but an 'accident of imperfection'," and move on with the main current of the life with confidence and uplifted vision.

XIV

WHEN LOVE DICTATES

IT WAS New Year's Day, in the lull between dinner and bed. The young people of the house had gathered about the reading table with pencils and tablets of paper, deep in the old rite of "I resolve——". They had all got that far at the top of the clean white sheet: then had come a pause, a biting at the pencil's end, a wondering as to just what to resolve first—for of course there would be a long list; didn't I remember?

But it was not of childhood days and those long, long resolves that I was thinking as I watched the children; watched the snow covering the earth with its blanket of purity, the sparks fly upward—all in the same old way. It was another memory, poignant as lost autumns, insistent as a hand on the shoulder. I wondered if he would mind my telling his story, that friend who went out not so long ago into the great goldenness where we hope so much more is understood and all is forgiven. "Would you

mind?" I found myself asking, lifting my eyes as to a real presence there back of my chair in the firelight.

He was a most unhappy human being, this bachelor who had too much income and not enough to do, and rather poor health: at fifty, a peevish misanthrope bent on self-destruction. He would go to his handsomely appointed club, hand over his hat and stick to a uniformed automaton, select one of the deep-cushioned lounging chairs, order his special brand of cigar, then give himself up to the luxury of meditating on how hateful the world was. He hated most people. He especially hated his relatives; it seemed to him that they were always edging in on his domain, unreasonably expecting things of him. He hated anniversaries—Christmases and New Years particularly. He hated Life itself; for everything he had ever tried to do had been a failure. He was always contemplating suicide. He had a nice sense of decency; he wanted to do it in orderly fashion. So, having devoted his youth to chemistry, he worked at intervals on the concoction of a mixture that would bring him speedy release from his body, and leave the world (which he abhorred, but was at such pains to fool) unenlightened as to the cause of his taking off.

He had one friend, a woman, who did not avoid him—for people as a rule run from a misanthrope. When his unhappiness would become acute, he would go to see his friend, and pacing the floor, he would pour out to her the tale of his latest woe, winding up with the assertion that he would yet end it all; they'd see! Then she would talk soothingly to him, maybe lure him into the hills for a brisk walk, tire him out, change his point of view. Gradually the blackness would leave him. Sometimes he would return with her to her home, and sitting down at the piano, run his fingers over the keys till he found language for the thing he really wanted to express with his life—only nothing would let him! And out of his playing would come such longing for human friendliness that—well, perhaps it was this that gave his one friend patience. Later, however, he would return to his club: and begin all over again to accumulate fresh reasons for hating the world.

The time came at last, a few days before a Christmas when the spirit of jollity in the air got insufferably on his nerves, that he decided to end his life at once. His "dose" was now ready. There was no reason for delay. He went to his room, swallowed his mixture, and with freshly kindled interest, for he was a true scientist,

lay down to note the effect. . . . Minutes passed . . . hours . . . nothing happened. It was as if he had taken no dose. In utter disgust he flung out of bed into his clothes and went to see his friend, to whom he poured out an account of his latest failure, soundly berating the disloyalty even of drugs.

She listened, then she took a new tack. She said: "To all intents and purposes, then, you are dead. You wished it. You willed it. It is only by a quirk in chemistry that you are not. Very well, then, from this instant you're a dead man, for it's the intent and not the letter of the law that counts."

He looked at her in amazement.

"Just suppose," she went on, "that at this instant, instead of talking with me here in the flesh, only your spirit could speak. Suppose that now you were actually gone out of your body; that instead of it being the old earth-you full of earth-poisons that is talking right now, only your spirit were communicating with mine. In other words, suppose Love alone dictated —what changes would you make?"

He flung himself into a chair. "I suppose," he said at last, "my niece Molly might as well have those old andirons she's hinted for every

Christmas since she was married—as if I, being a bachelor, had no feeling for family heirlooms!"

"Good!" said the friend, ignoring the rising tide. "Molly gets the andirons. What next?"

He became interested. "Well, my cousin Martha always wanted grandfather's old homestead. She is the eldest of us and has the most sentiment about it. Let her have it! I only left it to my valet to spite her."

A pencil was working. "Cousin Martha gets the old homestead. What next?"

He sprang to his feet and began to pace the floor. "Brother Jim never told his family that I let him have my entire fortune to save him from bankruptcy! That was twenty years ago —and he never told them! Let them think I was sponging off him all those years that I lived in his house like a poor relation while he was getting his business on its feet! Let them think I was one more burden——"

"Wait, wait," interrupted the friend, "that's old earth-self talking, and that self has no medium now. Only Love can speak."

He sank into a chair, breathing hard. At last, "Well, I suppose I could cancel old Jim's note. I left it to be collected and the money to go to my club. That would cripple old Jim,

might make him fail. . . . Yes, I suppose I might as well cancel that note."

And so the game went on between the two: he was a dead man—that is, the earth-self was dead, and Love alone dictated. . . .

Little by little the new habit of thought and act was established. Little by little he became as a new man. Molly named her baby, that arrived almost with the andirons, for him. Jim read his New Year's present letter, then immediately assembled his family and told them the truth about the loan, how long ago he had faced ruin, from which his brother had saved him. The family, full of compunction, began to show him kindness in endless loneliness-lifting ways; began to try to make it up to Uncle. Cousin Martha reopened the old homestead and called the scattered members of the family together in a reunion that brought them all closer in spirit and interest. Uncle's eccentricities were overlooked, his actual unhappiness recognized, and such was the humanizing effect that as time went on he became one of the most generally loved of old bachelors, going about the earth steadily playing a game that never ceased to bring zest into his life.

"I resolve to let Love dictate." Just suppose that line were written at the top of every white

sheet in the land, where the pencil trails hesitant. Just suppose that resolve were lived up to for one year. Can you see what a difference it would make?

This is a day of earnest quest after truth: What is right? How bring about success? There are outlines, surveys, and questionnaires. Long lists have reached me—as they have thousands of others—demanding facts as to my birth, ancestry, education, work, play, reading. But not a single questioner has asked: "What have you found to be the vital thing in living?" As if it didn't matter. As if we were only so many machines, galvanized and set going, the one thing of moment to others being the manner in which we operate, our upkeep, our output. Well, let us turn questioner and do some probing on our own account. Let us go back to that very oldest book, written by the Egyptians some thousands of years before Moses. They were a learned people, full of knowledge: what thing had they found out that they considered of the most importance to hand on to others? We read, "Live, therefore, in the House of Kindliness."

Let us go to the Chinese, who invented printing and achieved centuries of peace—which shows the power of the printed word in achieving

a desired condition in a nation. . . . What do we find dominating this earliest of all printed literature? Only precepts concerning the conduct of men toward men that they might learn to live happily together on the earth. . . . Look into the Bible—what words are most frequently used? Love, mercy, faith, light, peace: the lessons taught there—out of life experience—needed these words more often than any other in their telling. . . . Let us come on down: the Pilgrim fathers and mothers are landing on a bleak coast, homesick, forlorn, frightened by the isolation and the dangers of the wilderness that crept over them like a cloud. What counts most in that testing time? Love—only that. Divine Love interpreted in terms of kindness to one another, in mutual helpfulness. . . . Let us move on—pioneers are on the long trek west. What assures the success of the expedition, as the driver prods his weary oxen across the uncharted wastes? It is the human quality, that is all; the coöperation between mortals, the helpfulness of one with another, when there are illness, loss, a death, when savages attack, when the elements hurl their blasts. . . . Time passes. Inventions change modes. The traveller rides on cushions instead of hard wagon seats, and covers six hundred miles a day instead

of ten. He even flies and does his two hundred miles an hour. But what is still the most vital thing in his life? What records the high-water mark of his evolution as an enlightened human being? Not steam, not wheels on rails, not even wings, but love, just that. The measure of his love for his fellow man, love interpreted in terms of human helpfulness.

The new church is of stately architecture, with an eloquent pastor and lovely music. The school building is of the latest pattern, the equipment the most modern, the teachers have diplomas from our foremost institutions. A mother goes among her children providing them with instruction, preparation for life. But is Great Love back of all these manifestations of energy and efficiency? Or only pride—church pride, civic pride, maternal pride?

I recently visited a "Home" for old people. The manager took me all over the place, showing me his electrically equipped kitchen, his vacuum cleaners, his sanitary plumbing, his shower baths, etc. And then we came upon the inmates, huddled, in all the crisp freshness, in an abject sort of apathy. The manager did not see them, so absorbed was he in his explanation of his fire drill. But I saw them, saw their dreary faces, no light in them, no warmth, no inspira-

tion. And I know that every one of them would gladly leave it all—run, to get away, if necessary—to find some homely kitchen of familiar memory where a wood stove, perhaps, gave suffocating heat in summer, and wet wood, perhaps, made fires difficult in winter, but where human contact was friendly. To sit on some porch where the boards swayed, perhaps, or the roof leaked, but where someone went in and out who cared, who showed it in eyes and words and common little services.

Brains and efficiency—plus love at some point—have given us all sorts of institutions for caring for our unfortunates. But are these institutions anything more than blind alleys into which mortals who otherwise would be in our way are run—unless they are filled with the spirit of Love?

Probe as we may, where we may, in what times we may, among the low of earth or the high, we find the same thing: everywhere and in every age human happiness and security have depended on the presence of Love. Don't you suppose those old writers, those inspired ones, sensed that? Don't you suppose that they saw that inventions would take care of themselves, sciences would take care of themselves, knowledge would take care of itself? Given the globe with

all the elements in it, and on it, and over it; given man with his inquisitive mind—there could be but one outcome: Man must eventually conquer the earth, ride on the tides, make the winds do his bidding. Not failure of scientific research, invention, and discovery would check progress of civilization—only failure in Love. This was the thing to be guarded against, the thing emphasized.

Watch a little child at his play. It is not difficult to teach him to spin his top, but to let the other little boy take a turn at spinning his top. It is not difficult to teach him to add and multiply and divide figures in the schoolroom—he awakens easily to this lesser form of knowledge—but it is very difficult to teach him to add the lonely little outsider to his game when on the playground, to multiply his friendships, to divide his "treat." And yet we have expended our energy on the one and left the other to chance. Always we have been conceited about our brains, considering mental power the highest mark of human attainment, when all the time love power holds the highest place. Brains informed by love have rid the world of many ills, but brains not so informed have put into the world a balancing portion of ills. The aëroplane carries medical supplies to a stricken

region, but it also drops bombs on houses of suffering. God gave us brains to use; He never intended that we should sit idly and wait for blessings to be put in our hands. He gave us brains for equipment in conquering the earth—but He gave us the Light that shines from Great Love to direct our brains.

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another." "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." Our probing would suggest that it wasn't birth, or ancestry, or education, or methods of work—or even facts of biology or Gatling guns or death-dealing gases that the Christ emphasized as the things of highest importance to the race: only this, the necessity of Great Love. I can imagine Him saying, "If only they have Great Love, they will want to discover all the secrets of the earth for the benefit of human happiness; give them Great Love, and all else will follow."

Picture yourself at the end of life, about to leave: and then conduct a questionnaire of your own: What gave you your great moments? That high-powered car? That beautiful new home? The thrill from such things—fine as it is and desirable—goes, at the last, I imagine, along with all purely earth things, but that which persists through to the end and beyond—

isn't it the voice of one who spoke with compassion when you were deeply troubled? The hand that gripped yours when you needed reassurance? The note of sympathy that came like a bird's song into the waste place life had made about you? . . . Then the memories—that night you held a sick baby to your breast all through the hours when its exhausted mother could keep up no longer—a time when you stepped aside and allowed another to win the prize that gave her an interesting trip, because you felt that she needed it more than you did—a weariness of months when you helped another to make a foundation on surer ground—words that rose at times like searing flames to your lips, but that you suppressed—winged words that went softly. On such things as these must we depend to string that last chain as with pearls for our caressings. We need have a care lest the chain be scantily strung, lest our groping hands fine a poverty of treasures. . . .

"I will let Love dictate." Can we do better?

XV

DOING DOUBLE DUTY

IF I had the power of wishing just one gift on all humankind, I think I'd wish a sense of humour. One shudders at what must be the consequences, sometimes, where one lacks it. Injustices must strike in too deeply for soul health, bitternesses curdle the spirit, and general wretchedness prevail; where, if one could only laugh, as the gods looking on must laugh —when they don't cry—the atmosphere would be cleared, and one would be enabled to go on again, an amused spectator of the inconsistencies of mortal man—and woman.

All of which homily is inspired by having been a witness to an ordinary little tragedy—or was it comedy?—in a neighbour's kitchen. I ran in on a sunny Saturday morning, and I found there, standing at an ironing board, listlessly driving an iron over a tea-cloth—a huge basket of rolled-down clothes at her elbow—a young woman who on other days taught school

and maintained the small bungalow she and her mother occupied. Happening to know that a picnic was on for that day, of the girl's friends, I said, perhaps too managerially:

"Why in the world isn't Myra at the picnic?"

And Myra's mother, at her late breakfast in the breakfast nook, replied somewhat caustically to my implied criticism, "Because, I suppose, she knew the ironing was to be done."

Now, that's the tragedy part of the piece; here's the comedy: I accepted the mother's invitation to visit with her while she finished her breakfast—and while Myra went on monotonously pushing the iron over the cloth—and the thing that was on the mother's mind, that had impelled her to hospitality that she might have fresh ears on which to pour out her wrath, was that her new daughter-in-law, who lived in a neighbouring house, hadn't the faintest idea of a *man's* need of recreation.

"Think of it!" she flared out, eggspoon in midair. "Expecting Hal to help her about the house on Saturdays, his one day off, when she knows he's been used to playing golf on Saturdays! Why, from the time he was the littlest boy there was always his football, or swimming, or fishing, or coasting, or *something!* I never asked anything of Hal Saturday afternoons!"

And Myra, the earning daughter, ironed right on. . . .

Well, that's just about the situation. There is no way to understand it except to trace the slant of mind back to a time when all the females who could, got married, and all the others lived on them. And all that greatly concerned the female mind was the upholding of the male in his effort to support his numerous females, keeping him reasonably contented to do it. And so it came about quite naturally that the most comfortable big armchair was always Father's, the food he liked came on the table. . . . "No, we never have codfish, Father doesn't like it." . . . And if Father was away, "Well, we'll just eat a bite in the kitchen, as Father isn't coming home"; and the children were sent to bed early so as not to fret Father, and he must have his driving horses, and his club, and his friends, and his trips—all this to rest him from the strain of supporting the family. And when he grew fractious—as he sometimes did—and kicked at the chandelier, and said bad words, and stamped out of the house and slammed the door—why, poor Father's nerves were in a sorry way, and everyone must be very quiet and tactful, when he should return that evening, to placate him. The world was his, and the family.

And there remain women of this slant of mind to-day: women who cannot escape from habit back to original design. Women who have not rallied to changed economic conditions. No matter how modernly they may talk, and dress, and conduct themselves, in the background is the ancestral slant—women for domestic routine, men for freedom. No vocational intelligence, no reasoning from conditions as they are; just the ancestral slant with sex the determining factor. Only last summer one of these elderly early-feminine minds from the Middle South, sitting on my porch in the Far West, contemplating arrangements being made for the annual mountain-climbing expedition of the Mazamas, said to me with apparent distress, "But, my dear, do the gentlemen enjoy their vacation as well with the ladies along?"

"*Their*" vacation, you understand—with the ladies "*along*." Ladies didn't have vacations, you see; they were only "along," and this whole question of their going at all resolved itself into whether or not their presence added to the gentlemen's pleasure. I found it difficult to summon patience to explain that, to us of the Western rim, this wonder-earth and all that is on it belong to *humankind;* and some of this humankind is male and some female; and some of both kinds

love mountain climbing and some don't; and those who do, climb. That "ladies" were not "along," but that they belonged, paid dues, and everything, just as the men did. That it wasn't a man's club, or a woman's club, but a *mountain-climbing* club. And all who were sufficiently hardy, and had a desire to see the world from the top of great heights, were welcomed as valiant lovers of the upward way. And I wanted to add that in fine high endeavour there is no sex, whether it's climbing icy peaks or working through to spiritual heights—only she was older and I couldn't preach.

But getting back to where we started: This early-feminine mind, trained by tradition to look one way on a man and another on a woman, readily acknowledges the unwritten law that the bread-winner is entitled to personal care from those whom he supports, and to his uninvaded time during his hours away from his office, *when this bread-winner is a male.* But when the bread-winner is a female, what then? Oh, that's very different. Daughter always, as she grew up—in some parts of our country more than in others—stepped in under and carried the domestic load, leaving Mother more and more, as the years went on, to a sitting sort of life that contributed to an early old age—and fat. This wasn't so

bad for Daughter when she married, for she had become efficient about a house. But there came the economic change, and Daughter stepped out into an office. But while she changed her habit of life and thought and ancestral slant, the mother—as a rule—didn't change hers. She thought it was fine for Daughter to have her own spending money—she had never had enough, herself—but she still continued to regard Daughter as belonging to the domestic side of the household. She got no conception of her as having stepped out of domestic service when she stepped over into business. No conception of her as needing the same up-keep as any male bread-winner. And so—all too generally—it has come about that Daughter does double shift, a day's work in studio or office, and then another day's work in the home, Mother looking on, the while, with the utmost complacence.

I know a mother who will say, quite placidly, each summer, when school is out and her two teaching daughters are again at home, "Now I'll have my vacation." And she turns the housework over to them. Another mother, who, when her son was at home, on seeing his approach from his day's work, would throw down her book or needlework and hustle among the pots and pans, hurrying, that he need not be

kept waiting, to have a nice dinner on the table. But now that he is gone and Daughter carries the load, she scarcely looks up on her approach, further than to greet her and suggest what is in the icebox—"if you want to bother to fix it." Another mother allows her earning daughter, who is none too strong, to do all the sweeping, remarking to a neighbour, "It makes a good change for Jenny, sweeping, after she's been in the office all day." But do rug shaking, and paint washing, and window cleaning make a good change for Son after he's been in the office all day? Oh, no, indeed; he must have his golf!

A drawing teacher, who is fading too soon, with ridges steadily deepening between her eyes, rises an hour earlier than would otherwise be necessary to cook her mother's breakfast and carry it in to her. The mother is as well as the average mortal—certainly as well as her daughter—but she likes her breakfast in bed, and daughters do such things for mothers. Then Daughter prepares her own breakfast, hurriedly eats it—for time is pressing—tidies up her room, makes a list of things to get down-town, pulls into her studio clothes, and, already weary, hurries to her studio, preparatory to guiding clumsy fingers over drawing paper all day. In the late afternoon she visits store and market,

brings the dinner home with her, prepares it mostly, afterward does a bit of mending, irons a blouse, and presses a skirt to be fresh for the next day, and at ten o'clock tumbles into bed. She is always too weary to enjoy going out, too weary to enjoy seeing friends. And Mother? She is quite sprightly; often says she wishes Cora was more "sociable"; that she's younger this minute than Cora is—and she is.

A business woman made a home for herself and her younger sister. The sister, product of the early-feminine slant, sometimes had dinner on the table and sometimes didn't, as it suited her social plans, and gave no personal service whatever, but when she married, she became the most dutiful and regular of housewives, attending punctiliously to socks, buttons, buttonholes, collar buttons, etc. And yet the husband was far stronger than the sister, not doing nearly such hard work; also it was his duty to make her a home, and it was not the sister's. In a division of responsibility for dependents, the son will contribute money, but he is not so apt to contribute himself. The daughter—as a rule—contributes money plus herself. If a mother is to make her home with a child, it is almost invariably with the daughter, especially if she is ailing. The son will send her presents, do the

ornamental things—breeze in with a box of candy or a bouquet of flowers—but the day-by-day care of an elderly lady in her declining years is generally left as a matter of course to the daughter. If the daughter plans a vacation, she is expected to plan one that Mother can negotiate, an unexciting, sitting sort of vacation on some rocking-chair-infested veranda. But when the son plans a vacation, is he expected to take his mother? He is not. He is a son. He cuts loose and goes fishing.

"Oh, to marry a wife!" cried a business woman.

And as another expressed it, "It isn't earning a living that's hard—it's living!"

I know a business woman who confesses to frequent crying spells in bed, just thinking of the many little things she has to do when she gets up. Nerves. Pure nerves.

Now, I can hear the outcries of people who have a different story to tell: of mothers who are 100-per-cent. caretakers of their earning women. But wait: I know that kind, too—whole heaps of them. But these cared-for earning women are not the ones who are breaking down, who look haggard, who dislike business and are a bit discouraged with living. As my three-year-old niece said to her father with a stamp of

her little foot, when urged by him to contentment with the toys she had on the theory that the little girls in Russia didn't have one-hundredth part as many: "But I'm not talking about those little girls! I'm talking about *me!*" I am not talking about the cared-for ones; I am talking about these others.

I know a mother and a daughter that I wish could be set up as models. They live together on the daughter's income as an advertisement writer. The daughter sits down to breakfast each morning at a daintily laid table, always with flowers. The two eat together, without haste, the mother sometimes reading bits aloud from the morning paper, sometimes from one of the old philosophers, from the Bible—something stimulating or inspiring or restful. The daughter goes to work in a happy, unclouded state of mind, with nothing to prevent a clean swing out into the problems of the day. She carries away no long list of errands to be attended to, no vexing decision to make as to the dinner that evening, no vision of mending, pressing, and washing-out of extras in the way of collars, laces, and handkerchiefs. Her mother will have all those things attended to—that is all in her department, and she does her work with the same thoroughness that makes her daughter a success in

her department. If she wishes to bring a friend home to dinner, she has only to call up and see if it's all right with Mother—she never oversteps courtesy—and generally Mother says, "I'll lay another plate, dear," and that is all there is to that. As for the dinner itself, it is invariably irreproachable, *and on time*. After dinner Mother either washes up, or stacks the dishes in a closed hot-water receptacle, leaving them till the following morning, and Daughter takes her after-dinner nap—Mother insists on this; she has had her own in the afternoon. Together, later, they go out, or friends come in for a game of bridge or talk. They are together in spirit, in effort toward a sane, balanced life. But each is free to run off for a little trip—there is no coercion in the partnership. Mother is no more servant to Daughter than Daughter is to Mother: it is coöperation. And I wish you could see Daughter—such buoyancy! Why, the girl seems never tired or low-spirited, and she adores business—loves to write ads, is having the happiest, fullest sort of life.

Then there is Gay, a music teacher. Her mother goes a bit far, we all agree, brushing Gay's hair, and massaging her scalp, and manicuring her nails, and working the tiredness out of her hands

in addition to keeping up the small apartment. We make all manner of fun of Gay for letting her mother do it. But this mother insists she loves to do these things for Gay; that she did them for her when she was a baby, and her skin and hair are as nice to touch now as they were then, and she loves her just the same, so why shouldn't she have the privilege? Her joy is in this product of her own life, in keeping it up —as some women do a garden, others a dog. And neither is Gay breaking down or growing haggard, or unhappy, or dissatisfied with a professional career.

And there's Cynthia, always frail, but who insisted that her mother, who had been a school principal for thirty years, retire and let her carry the load. She went into an office, and having inherited her mother's executive ability, advanced rapidly; and her mother put her capacity for oversight, which she had been expending on a building and several hundred youngsters, on this one five feet of pluck, taking personal care of her daughter, especially of her diet, with the result that she not only made a success of her work, going on fully into life as her mother let go, but she grew comparatively robust. Business is healthy—no one breaks down in business

in moderation—only from the strain of business plus: and the plus with the average business woman is the minus quantity of home care.

Why, the crudest race-horse owner wouldn't think of leaving his horse just to toss up his head and start racing, then when he's through let him go off to a pasture and find his own rest and food and water. He knows that if his horse is to have any show to win, any show to be in condition to keep on winning, he must be rubbed down, and blanketed, and watered, and fed judiciously. It's the horse's innate qualities, plus training, plus care, that make him a winner, not his innate qualities alone.

Almost all earning women have dependent or semi-dependent relatives. When the dependent becomes a compensating factor, the problem of the business woman's life is solved in more ways than those merely of service. The face at the window watching for one is the symbol of life as we must live it—male and female—if it is to be sufficiently balanced for health of mind and body. There must always be someone at home to do it for. It isn't possible for the earning woman to make her life balanced and whole without strings to something human in a place she calls home. And—if this is not putting it too harshly—many older women have—all un-

consciously, perhaps—capitalized this human need of hers, accepting not only the home, but personal service at her hands, failing to see their own part in such a combination. When this older woman sees her part, and does it, she has no need to feel herself on charity: she is giving fully as much as she is getting. Few business women earn sufficiently large incomes to help with the support of others than themselves and to hire domestic service besides. The presence of the dependent eliminates the possibility of regular hired service. Therefore the dependent should step in and fill the place. For those without dependent relatives, the problem is perhaps even more difficult.

"But I love domestic things!" Ah, there's another rub—another slant of the generations. Very well, do domestic things after your office day, but don't take them on as a necessity. Have someone else about who is responsible, and you merely play with them. Or else give up for ever going beyond mere routine work in business: for law is law: and even the fact of an unselfish motive cannot abrogate the penalty for its breaking. The same eyes, nerves, muscles, tendons, gray matter, cannot keep on doing the same sort of thing—detail, detail, detail—a day in an office, and all evening in a home, without

either wearing out, or becoming so deadened that fresh ideas, fresh inspiration, and fresh plans cannot take hold. Until the earning woman is as free of domestic details as the earning man, she will never be his equal in business, for she will never have his opportunity. She must be free for relaxation with the closed desk, free of mind, of body, with free impulses toward play, toward athletics, toward the doings of the big outside world, toward the newspapers, toward any and every thing but a continuation of detail. A few women forge ahead without this freedom, but they may be ranked with the specially gifted, and among them are early breakdowns and tombstones on which might be appropriately engraved, "She worked not wisely, but too well."

But how is the thing to be worked out? That is up to two special groups of women: the earning women who need the personal service of home-makers; and the home-making women who need to earn: in individual homes, in groups, in clubs, and other combinations, working coöperatively. For, of course, there is not always a relative to be pressed into service. Back of the entire domestic situation is an ancient false attitude toward housework. It being considered a menial job—another ances-

tral slant we shall have to straighten up before ever we get the machinery of living on a sound basis—the average woman of any social standing would rather starve than go into another's kitchen as a domestic.

A young woman architect, nervously worn out and unable to afford a long season of rest, decided she would go into a kitchen to earn her living and incidentally gain first-hand knowledge of kitchen architecture. But her entire family rose up in horror at the suggestion and ordered her to go to another town, among strangers, if she must do this disgraceful thing. They were not able to provide the rest she needed, but they would rather "see her in her grave" than be so humiliated. Our household arts courses are helping a great deal toward a saner mind on this subject, but we are still a long way from sanity. That a woman will cheerfully give domestic service to her minor children and her men, but will side-step performing the same duties for another grown woman—even her own daughter—is a direct outcome of this false standard. She may not analyse it, she may not understand the instinct that dominates her, but deep under everything else she feels that she is being a servant to another woman, and she resents it. Boarding-house keepers proverbially

prefer men to women for the same reason. It is difficult for one woman to be just as nice as she ought to be to another woman who, she thinks, may be looking down on her a bit.

The first job, then, is to change the traditional feminine slant on domestic service. Smash the old belief. It has long overstayed its welcome. Right this minute there are thousands of cultivated, well-bred women who are seriously needing to earn, but they'd rather face a fire than an office. Their traditional slant is altogether toward things domestic—and yet here is this other traditional slant, just as strong and deeply rooted, that lays down the law, "For your blood-own only do this service"—and they are restrained—and we get poor office workers and no home-makers.

We talk of the weird customs of the Orient: is there anything more weird in the annals of any people than that though you be gifted of the gods for producing flaky biscuit and juicy steaks, you can produce these delectables only for your flesh and blood-own? Just suppose a portrait painter could paint only the portraits of his relatives, and suppose he had no relatives—what tragedy, but what comedy, too!

These special women, gifted with the ability to make homes that are bits of heaven on earth,

have a glorious opportunity: to fight for the right to use their inherent gift for the good of humankind and for their own earning, just as women fought to be admitted to medical colleges, to clinics, and to law schools. Only, instead of men's prejudices, they will have women's prejudices to overcome. Women have been fighting for years to enter the fields men had claimed as their own exclusively. Let them fight just as valiantly now to enter, honourably and respected, as other employees are respected, this field that has always belonged exclusively to women. Shall it continue for ever to be said that a young woman may work in an office—created by and in the atmosphere of men—with honour and respect, but in a home, created by and in the atmosphere of women, with condescension and disdain? Is an office, then, so much higher than a home?

Women write me over and over: "Oh, if there was only some work I could do! But I seem only able to make a home—and no home offers."

But homes do offer. Business women's homes—domesticity without bossing—with the "boss" away all day. Be a crusader. Remould public opinion. Put domestic service, with scientific care of house and diet, in the class with teachers,

nurses, office help, and with wages, hours, and respect commensurate. A crusade that would do this would accomplish more for civilization than has any other crusade in the world's history. It's the biggest single piece of work to be done in the world to-day. For—can't you see it?—such a crusade, carried to a successful issue, would bring about, not only intelligent service, but understanding, sympathy, a joining of hands, an interlocking of interests. It would do away with snobs, it would take the sting out of work, it would prevent the building up of class distinctions, that evil that is to-day making Europe a tottering ruin. It would humanize life and increase love in the world—and love only can lift us up.

I know a young woman who has made the start—cultured, a college graduate, with a lovely low voice and beautiful ideals, and the power to cook in her finger-tips, and the love of God in her heart. She's taken a job to cook. Fortunate are they whom she will serve: fortunate is she to serve youth. She is cooking for a group of young women.

If she were multiplied by ten thousand this next year, and then by ten times ten thousand, what advance might we not expect from our homes, from our business women! Women,

aren't you ready for such a move? Then join up! Take a household job! Respect it and compel everyone else to respect it! Respect the woman who does your housework, and compel everyone else to respect her! Join the crusade in your own town, your own home—just where you are! Fight for perhaps this last unwon right of a woman, the right to be a business woman without the burden of domesticity, the right to be a domestic woman in the home of another without losing caste!

XVI

THE SHARED LIFE

Ring around a rosy,
Pocket full of posy—
Last one down's IT!

SO SANG a circle of little girls, all curls and ribbons and fluttering skirts and sash ends, as they whirled joyously round and round, deep in the old game. Apart from them stood an awkward, overgrown child in homely country garb, looking wistfully on, wishing with all her little soul that she, too, might play. Presently the whirling stopped, and one of the circle pulled her hand loose, called out, "Susy, come play with us!" And there was one more happy little heart on the school ground where there had been growing a hurt, resentful one.

Years later two women were talking together of their friendship which had lasted from childhood.

"What began it?" asked the younger. "Do you know, I can't remember."

And the elder painted for her the above picture. The incident gone utterly from the mind of its sponsor, but the thing it started living on to give warmth to all her days.

It is lamentably true that the attitude of social inclusiveness is not universal. The half-dozen skipping children with only one extending a welcome to the outsider fairly demonstrates the situation. And yet, could we have looked deep into the hearts of each of those whirling children, we might have found the lack more one of initiative or training than of native generous impulse. For we all know that much good feeling toward our fellows goes dead within us. Things flash up in our minds to do or say that we do not put into execution. Fear grips us. Maybe we wouldn't be understood; maybe it was a foolish impulse; maybe someone else should take the lead. Often, in the most highly developed people intellectually, the social side has been so ignored or repressed through the forming years that the friendly impulse fails to rise beyond the realm of subconscious yearning. The impulse itself may be so steadily thwarted that it no longer leaps up spontaneously. We are not to blame for so much, we mortals. So many mistakes have been made in our forming, and inhibitions that go in early, go in deep.

"Oh, if I had only been brought up differently!" How often we hear it said!

Martha's mother stressed lessons, grades, high marks. Nothing mattered in school or later in college but that she should not fail in her examinations. No games, no parties, no free-and-easy swinging along in the camaraderie of play times—just study, study, study. Martha was graduated at the head of her class, but when she got out into the business world, she plunged quickly to the foot. Her marks gave her a high position, but her unsocial manner lost it for her. She didn't know how to meet people. She hadn't the habit of the cordial greeting, the instant response. She felt kindly toward humanity as a mass—contributed to worthy charities, helped starving children overseas—but she hadn't the habit of small, gracious kindnesses toward the individual right at hand. She was blunt, abrupt; she said things that sounded rude when she meant only to be truthful. "Thank you" didn't come automatically to her lips; she had to think to say it, and she didn't always think quickly enough. She went from position to position, always doing acceptably the work for which she had been specially trained, but always losing out in the end. At last she began

to see the light, and she could only exclaim, "Oh, if I had only been brought up differently!"

We have made subject for special ridicule women we call "social climbers," but we have not paid much attention to the story written on the other side of the shield—the story of families upon families where the parents do their duty as they see it, educating their children in books, but never paying the least attention to their education for right human contacts. Preparing them for the technique of a definite money-making vocation, but never seeing the need, in the world of business as elsewhere, for social technique. Oblivious of the fact that the human element is now recognized, from highest to lowest, as necessary, not only for success, but for continued existence. Such parents give small consideration to the place their children occupy in the community; to the friendships they are forming—or not forming; to the possible source in due season for husbands for daughters, or wives for sons. Taking all this side of life for granted, leaving the most fateful events in human experience wholly to chance. When we scorn, we should make sure we are not lumping with the whole something from which we might well take a lesson.

Perhaps nothing in the entire gamut of human experience can lay so sure a foundation for life-failure, and bring such poignant suffering at the time, as this thing of growing up with only the privilege of looking on at life's social side: looking on and seeing other young people laughing and playing, jesting and making merry—having all youth's natural overflow and effervescence. Often it begins in earliest school days, as it seemed about to begin with little Susy: the child is timid, shrinking, perhaps unattractively dressed; maybe there is no one at home to help her over the first difficulties. She begins by looking on at the school game. Later, at her schoolmates as they run happily with their rackets to tennis courts. A wistful little shadow-shape, she moves through the youth of her days, looking on, always looking on. But hoping—always hoping. Things will be different some day, so she dreams. Once it almost happens—she is almost asked to a party! One of the girls tells her she is going to be asked. She dreams of it for days; wonders if Mother could fix up her last summer's organdy to look like a party dress. She wants to tell Mother about it, ask her how she should reply if a boy should invite her. But she has never talked with Mother of these things; she feels embarrassed. She can't,

someway, approach Mother on the subject—and yet, what *do* you say when a boy asks you to a party? . . . She wasn't invited, after all. It was all a mistake. Bitterness creeps in. There are tears, 'way in the night, hidden from everyone—hard, racking sobs.

She is graduated. She is alone, now, with her time; maybe she accepts a position in a schoolroom or office—but there's emptiness. She hasn't made any lasting school ties. She is out of everything. In the evenings, her work done, she is restless. Mother says, "Get a book and read." But she is weary of books. Or Mother says, "Go hear a good lecture." But she is sick of lectures, her brain cells are exhausted, and all the other unused life cells are clamouring for use. A book can't satisfy; a lecture can't satisfy. She wants LIFE—her own life.

Her salary increases: she has pretty clothes now. She makes some acquaintances. She is invited to a party. She goes, dreading it, not sure she is wearing the right thing, not sure how she should conduct herself. The other guests chat easily, refer to old-time school gatherings, parties, and picnics. But she doesn't follow the references. No, she was not there, that time they had the "calico" party. No, she wasn't on the school picnic when the boat

stranded. She has no memories of shared joys and adventures. She begins to feel once more out of things, self-conscious, constrained. She doesn't know any social "stunt"; she doesn't play games, doesn't talk freely unless on some serious subject she has studied. She goes home and once more cries herself to sleep.

She is not invited again, for she didn't contribute anything to the evening's pleasure. Hostesses, however kindly disposed, have a responsibility: the party must be a success. That stiff, silent, shut-in girl eating gingerly at her courses, unable to engage that rather reticent man beside her in conversation; no, it will never do to ask her again. She will put him beside Betty Bates next time—Betty, who comes gaily in, tinkling her joy notes and making everyone thaw out. Yes, she will try him again, but not that prim little Sally Jones. Well, it won't do to leave Sally out altogether. She'll put her on a committee to see to something or other about the club or the church or something. Let her work. Sally is a fine worker and as good a girl as ever lived. And so poor Sally never gets her training ground.

Is the hostess selfish? Not altogether. The time for Sally to have been made into a desirable guest and the way paved for her inevitable in-

vitation was back there in her mother's home when she was growing up. That is where the selfishness lies—if any: in the closed door, the closed mind, the purblindness. Many a mother is not herself social: she has had a bringing up similar to Sally's, the social side ignored. And many a mother is not in the least blind to the importance of the social habit, but she thinks her house is not fit for "company." She is a thorough convert to the value of things. Nothing can shake her conviction that on Furnishings depends her social redemption.

But there are mothers who refuse to fail for any reason whatever. I know a mother of this kind: of a retiring nature herself, her family supplied all the social life she craved. But her daughter was social. And pretty. And they were in limited circumstances. Well, Nelly's mother began when the child was quite small, holding her to regular piano practice. Nelly had no special gift and very little voice. But her mother wanted to provide her with something to contribute—as she might put a penny in her hand for the collection box—as well as with an outlet for expression. When she went to school, her mother saw that she had the necessary items for all appearances—inexpensive, simple things, but the right things: a gym suit, a party frock,

outing togs. She encouraged her to play tennis, basketball—and, above all, to bring her friends home with her from school. The home was plain to severity, but always there would be a freshly made cake in the cupboard, a plate of extra good cookies, a tray of cream puffs, some simple thing that schoolgirls adore, and that again provided Nelly with something to contribute, something to make up for other lacks. Always the mother was with them in mind and sympathy, ready to listen, ready to suggest—and perhaps youth craves nothing else quite so intensely.

By the time Nelly entered college she had formed the social habit, which, analysed, is only the habit of give-and-take in pleasant human intercourse. And she had developed initiative: she could hurry home from school, toss together a cake, make a batch of fudge, a pot of hot chocolate, manage her own "treats." She led in her studies, but also in games. When a "sing" was demanded, she could sit down at the piano and play accompaniments, not wonderfully, but sufficiently well to make the hour glide happily along. She had it well ingrained in her being that if she was to have a "good time," she must make it; she was responsible.

With the right start, so many lost motions and back-trackings are avoided. There are no

painful jolts and readjustments. Things seem to move as naturally from success to success, in this old world, as they do from failure to failure. Nelly was graduated among the best-loved girls in school, taught, then married one of the boys who had come freely to her home in the old days of cream puffs and toothsome cookies. She had her "showers," her gifts, her pretty wedding among her young friends, missing nothing of a normal American girl's rightful heritage.

Was this mother a "social climber"? Not a bit of it! But she faced facts. She had given this child being. And if she was to give her also a chance at happiness—if she was to grow up through a happy girlhood into happy adulthood, with an unwarped, unbiassed outlook on life, without brooding, and introspection, and suppression—she must have the things that youth craves, each in its season. And youth craves, above all else, friendships. Perhaps in all of life nothing is better. So she did the simple things she could do to provide the atmosphere and background that would attract other young people of like minds.

When you say you can't have social life in your home because of that home's shortcomings, it is You who set up the insuperable barrier, not

the world at large. It is You who first utter the verdict. You pronounce it—and draw back. You say it can't be done—and quit. Just suppose you wait till the world utters it. Give the world a chance. Do your best, smile on it, hold out your hand to it, and see if the old world doesn't resolve itself into an assemblage of You's: merely You multiplied many times. And even as you appreciate the graciousness of the hostess more than the furnishings of her house, the quality of the table talk more than the quality of the silver, so will the world be interested in what You in your real self have to offer, rather than in the sticks and stones that chance to surround you.

A woman generally admired and loved for her unfailing friendliness of manner made an amazing confession. She said that in her youth she had conceived the idea that it was "nice" to be very exclusive—that there was something superior about knowing just a few people and having no commerce with humanity in general. A native shyness may have helped her to adopt the rôle—she hadn't an outstanding social gift. Well, the plan didn't manifest its weakness until her small circle of carefully selected friends began to grow smaller and smaller, as one by one they married, or died, or moved away. Gradually she grew lonelier and lonelier, until she felt she

must be the loneliest person in all the world. But she continued to hug to her breast the delusion of her own superiority, her fancied kinship with only what she deemed "superior" people. They were always lonely, the choice ones of earth—that was the way she put it to herself.

"Then, one day," she told me, "when walking along the beach at low tide, I fell to watching the molluscs that clung to the slimy, seaweedy rocks. I would touch one ever so lightly—scarcely a breath of a contact—and instantly it would gather itself up and tuck itself in under its shell. It suddenly came to me that I was just like a mollusc: instead of living as a very superior person, I was living on the plane of the lowest order of life. Did I want to be a mollusc? I did not! From that day I began to see life differently: I saw that a spirit of open-heartedness, confidence in one's fellow man, easy contacts with the humanity about one, indicated the highest human development: and that avoidance, fear, exclusiveness, indicated the lowest. The mollusc had opened my eyes. I took myself to task. Afraid of my own kind—how absurd! Afraid to put out feelers of friendliness, to send forth tendrils of kindliness! Eternally drawing back, eternally closing in on myself!

"I said to myself that I would change all this: I began on a new tack. I wasn't always understood. Sometimes I would offer a courtesy with the best intent and be snubbed for it. But I remembered my own unaccustomedness, that my social technique was faulty. And I remembered that there were still people in the world going by my old-time code: all the world hadn't seen the light because I had. I can assure you I had many a battle with the impulse to duck and run, to escape to my room and a book. But I didn't. I kept on."

Well, that was all . . . she kept on.

For she had seen, as we all must see when we come into the full light of understanding, that while self-preservation is the first law of life, as demonstrated in the mollusc, when it comes to man, there is a divine alchemy that transmutes our preservation of others into the only preservation possible to ourselves. And what is preservation of others but thought for others, consciousness of others, attentiveness to others? How can we "preserve" what we do not understand? How can we "understand" what we do not know? Round and round it goes in a circle.

The whole plan of human life must be based on the principle of sharing. The sun shares its

warmth with every animate and inanimate thing. The soil shares its wealth with all life. The waters share themselves with the soil. The birds breathe in the air and breathe it out again as song. Close a parcel of earth off from other elements, and it goes sterile. Stop water from circulating, and it becomes stagnant. Shut a bird away from light, and it ceases to sing. Cut yourself off from the living stream of humanity all about you, and by just so much do you defraud humanity and court for yourself stagnation and death.

Many of us still seem in the mollusc stage—shrinking, fearful, refusing contacts—but we are not molluscs; we are up-standing, moving-about mortals, so why cling to the plane of the shell-bound? Many of us still seem in the barnyard stage—as when a freshly hatched brood of chickens will peck to death the one that is different. But we are not of the barnyard, so why hold fast to barnyard traits? The other is the way to progress—and the other is the way the world is slowly but surely moving.

For it's "Ring around a rosy" here and there and everywhere. And more and more are the happy-conditioned ones breaking the ring that closes others out, and issuing the invitation, "Susy, come play with us!" And more and

more are the little "Susys" forgetting the ways in which they are different, and happily joining in—till we begin to see the dawn of a new day in the world—a day when there will be one continuous ring all around the globe, hands interlocked with hands, interests interlocked with interests, sharing all that we are with one another; sharing all that we know with one another; sharing all the manifold riches possible to life on this planet with one another—even as we now share the God who is above as our common Father; even as at the close of our days we share the earth under our feet as our common mother.

Then—then will a fragrant warmth rise from the earth like an incense, the warmth from human hearts universally quickened by one common, cordial impulse.

XVII

THE WOMAN WHO SHOULD MARRY

A DEAR, elderly widower had married a fussy, exacting body who demanded many things, completely upsetting his quiet habit of life and stability of income, and terribly agitating his adult children. Now she was insisting upon a small electric runabout just for herself. Sons and daughters uttered vociferous protest: "But, Dad, you can't afford it!" "Mother never had a car of her own!" "It's absurd when you just got through building her a new house!" And as a final unanswerable argument the son blurted out, "Why, Dad, get her that car, and she'll never be at home!"

And Dad, looking deeper, came back with a sly twinkle in his eye, "Perhaps that's the best thing about it."

It seems to me that this perfectly exemplifies a larger situation of our times: Men have cried out in alarm, "With all this suffrage, with all this entering of professions, with all this throwing wide of the world's doors, *women will rush out of*

the homes!" And I want to answer, "Perhaps that is the best thing about it"—only they won't cease their clamouring long enough to get it. We know—we women—that in all time there have been those in homes who did not belong there: women who would have honoured a judge's bench, thrilled an audience, cleaned up cities and towns and straightened out governments, written books, painted pictures, or modelled in clay, but who never while the sun shone down could make a home. And homes have been hells, and women's hearts torture chambers and children's lives embittered, and needed work in the world left undone, all because of a mistaken idea that all women should be shoved, drummed, crowded, pushed, coerced into homes. Perfectly satisfied with their reading of the law, never getting down to fundamentals, men have considered that the only failure was the failure of the woman to adapt herself to the situation.

Now, the truth is—and every woman knows it and no man—that many women are gifted for motherhood, for homemaking, for wives in the highest sense, and many have no more gift for this most social and most sacred of all vocations than they have wings to carry them to the moon! And when you haven't the gift, you can't properly mother, any more than you

can sing if you haven't a voice. You may learn the technique of motherhood, you may be an expert in baby clothes and fresh air and feeding, but if no fundamental, instinctive mother-gift be there, you cannot rise to the full possibilities of the calling. You've got to be a God-made mother first.

And so I say, the best thing about the throwing wide of the doors of the world is the calling of women out of homes, for in the general outpouring those who don't belong will rush out and find their rightful places, and the home-job will eventually fall to those who should hold it. Mothering will be left to the mother-gifted, and these you couldn't keep out—you couldn't drive out! Hold up a baby's sock, and the mother-hearted woman will turn to it from everything else. Bring a baby into the room, and she will see nothing else, hear nothing else, know nothing else. Her heart, her soul, her whole being is aflame with creation; her deep secret fires are fires of reproduction; her life is keyed to this one end, and no counter-attraction can sway her from it.

What men don't know—and women do—is that the mother-hearted woman can't be steered out of the home, and the non-mother-hearted woman can't be steered into it. You may steer

her body there, her labours, her daily routine, but you can't get her soul, her spirit, there. No house was ever made into a home by a chained personality, by one fighting inwardly to spread her wings and fly to other spaces.

"When my youngest child starts to school," sighed one of these chained women, "I'll be free!" And her eyes shone with the hope that was in her.

Another woman was discovered weeping as if her heart would break, and on inquiry as to the cause, sobbed out, "I just got to thinking that when baby is six, she will have to start to school and be away from me all day!"

That is just the difference: one finds the child a tiresome tie to distasteful routine, the other finds the child a source of delight, a miracle, a glory-thing, child of her heart, shedding brightness on all her tasks; no matter how exacting the duties, there is always in the background the consciousness of that wonder-child of hers. Hers—*hers*—she cannot quite believe it, the experience is so glory-filled. Haven't you watched these mothers? You will see them on street cars, in stores, here and there and everywhere, and sometimes with a choking in the throat, for you will see one who has lost her baby—maybe it was never born into life. A little child comes

near; instinctively her fingers slip into the rose-petal clasp; her face lights up with a light that never was, on sea or land.

A physician told me that the most wearing strain in his life came from dealing with mother-hearted women who for one cause or another were denied children—how they would come to him, willing to undergo any torment, willing to risk death, only that they might have their own child. It is as a thirst in the desert, as the hunger of the famine-cursed.

True mother love is fundamental; it goes down deep underneath everything else; it awakens into expression when the babe is conceived. Suddenly this woman loves divinely; she forgives; she becomes tender toward all humankind; she thinks sympathetically of all mothers; she is all at once akin, linked with the whole human race. As the new little life develops, as it comes more distinctly into her mind as a separate individual, she becomes worshipful toward God who has given her this privilege. Pain is nothing, discomfort is nothing, coming agony is nothing—the love-light quenches all darkness. And when at last the baby is brought to her, is laid in her arms, she knows that Heaven itself has no more to offer her. She draws the soft little form to her, and nestles the tender little head at her

breast, and says, "My baby!" And God is with her, and love makes a halo above her head.

Did you ever hear one of these other women talk—these non-maternal mothers? A well-to-do, tenderly-cared-for mother of four nice girls told me she had not experienced one solitary feeling of anything but the discomfort of the situation, a sort of repugnance to the whole affair, in bringing her babies into the world. She didn't want them, didn't care about children, didn't see why she should go through all that self-denial, staying in and missing all the good times, just to put children into the world! It was no more her responsibility than anybody else's, and lots of women didn't, and why should she? She couldn't wish a more terrible curse on her worst enemy than that she would have a baby! Wretched little puling things! Fortunately, a mother-hearted relative came to the rescue and mothered the little things, but even so, they are not notably softened into the finer sentiments of life, not especially fond of their mother.

Oh, the good fortune of that plastic little being that comes into consciousness on a wave of love that rushes out to meet it—loved into life, loved into maturity. Can there ever afterward be anything that will compensate for the loss

of this experience? Love has so many languages; it speaks from eyes, from lips, from songs, from words, from hastening feet. Technique can meet the physical needs, but it cannot supply the velvet comfort of a deep maternal love.

Children—little sensitive plates recording everything—feel the difference poignantly. A middle-aged woman eminent in world affairs told me the most-remembered thrill of her whole life was the first time any one called her "dear." She was one of a large, well-to-do family, but she had never been called a pet name, never been kissed save at formal leave-takings, never once been drawn to her mother's breast in tenderness. Her earliest memory was of being ordered with the other children into the garden to play and told to "keep out of my sight till dinner-time!" But she had two playmates who had a wonderful mother, a mother who watched over her children, beaming on them like some guardian angel. How she loved that woman who looked at little children with love in her eyes! Her heart ached with an unconquerable aching. Often, far down in the garden "out of sight," she would throw herself on the ground and sob herself weak and ill, just from loneliness. And then, one wonderful day when she was play-

ing with the little neighbour girls, something she did—she always wondered what it was, but she never knew, only that she had a kitten in her arms—some little thing caught the love-mother's attention. Looking up, the child met her eyes bent on her with the same beaming look she bent on her own children, and heard her say, almost under her breath, "You dear!"

The woman told me she ran home charged with joy. She said the words over and over to herself, and when she went to bed that night, she lay wide-eyed, staring up into the dark and recalling the beaming face, the words, "You dear!" No lover's words were ever so thrilling; no after experience was ever so sweet. Just a little, starved child-thing throbbing up to God in the immensity of the night, quivering back to him in joy, because His love had flooded all her being through the lips of a mother-woman.

Why, bless your soul, this is what mothers are for, why God made mothers—to put His love into the little new life, to start in it a fountain of love at its very inception! If reproduction had been the sole idea, there would have been better ways—as fish spawn—as seeds come in a pod. This individual mother way was not the only way to reproduce, but it was the only

way to charge each new little life with a living love.

I used often to watch a certain group of children playing lustily on a green lawn where fireflies winked and blinked their lantern lights, and a huge old tree was "base." With the coming of darkness, the children, at last tired out, would run to the wide veranda where mothers sat visiting together. From one of these would come sharply, "Now, Jimmy, don't you dare lie down there and go to sleep, just for me to undress!" From the other, tenderly, in a low voice, "Come, Bobby, come to Mother!" And Bobby would run to Mother, and settle down beside her on a hassock, and pillow his head on her knee, and she would wipe the perspiration from his moist, flushed face, and pat his cheek, and work her fingers through his tousled curls, till by and by he would drop off; then she would get up to take him in to bed.

There would come heated protests: "You are just spoiling that child! You are making a slave of yourself. I never put a child of that age to bed, and I never will!"

But she would only smile back, apologetic for her weakness, and go on in and help undress the little boy, bathe his warm body, slip him be-

tween fresh sheets, then sit beside him and sing softly while his lids grew heavier and heavier. Some way, there was always a beautiful look in her face when she came back—not at all a martyred look—not nearly so martyred a look as her friend wore.

I visited the same group not long ago. The far-away children are grown-ups now, married and doing well, but I heard Jimmy's mother talk bitterly of how it didn't "pay" to have children: they forgot you, forgot all you had "sacrificed" for them, were gone off on their own ends. If she had it to do over again, she wouldn't have children, she'd live her own life. I found that she had almost no contact with her son, rarely heard from him in his absences.

But the other mother! Flowers were on her reading table; it seemed Bobby kept a standing order at a florist's. He wrote her daily when absent; he needed her, missed her, wanted her; and he was just as manly—did just as fine service overseas—as the son of the other woman. Expressed love had not made him a "sissy"; it had only given him an understanding heart and the power to be with his mother through all the days growing for her ever more wintry. She is a contented woman with no complaints as to the ingratitude of children.

The avenue to the new little human heart is very tender, and unless travel over it begins soon and continues steadily, the way closes and it can hardly ever be reopened.

The difference between men in this thing of instinctive parental love is just as notable as it is between women. I have seen a young father choke up past control when his first baby was brought to him, overcome with the wonder of it all; and I have seen a father turn on his heel in disgust because it was a girl when he expected a boy, or vice versa, with no feeling whatever save of egoistic disappointment. The race in this matter cannot be divided into male and female, but in those born to be parents and those not.

A distinguished elderly gentleman had just been crowned with the highest honour of his life. All day people surged in, congratulating him. One woman arrived late after the others had gone. He sat there alone, gazing out the window, a look of life-sadness on his worn face. His friend offered her hand, felicitations. He lifted out of the reverie.

"My dear," he said, "my secretary was just called to the telephone with the message that his daughter wished to speak to him. Do you see that mountain against the sky? If it were

all mine, and solid gold, I would give every ounce of it to exchange places with him—to hear from a young girl's lips, as he just heard, 'Papa, is that you?'"

The old poignancy had swept in by way of an ordinary domestic flash to cloud his joy in his greatest earthly hour.

The scientists quite awhile ago discovered the way of the bees—how some were marked for parenthood and some for other callings—but they have seen no better way for the human species than for all to reproduce, then let Nature reduce the over-plus of population by way of war and pestilence. Dull, it seems, of the scientists!

And in what cruelties this misunderstanding has resulted! What tragedies for the woman doomed to a home and reproduction, when all the time something else God has planted in her for expression is calling with a fury that renders all her days and nights poignant with regret. Panting to escape! Praying for release! Nature pulling at her, tugging at her, demanding her for other fields! Nature is inexorable: she never ceases her calling. It's the true call, not of the wild, but of the real—which is perhaps the same thing, the call of that which God planted there, the thing He needed in his world to make it

go—and now that thing is all unattended to, because of a blind adherence to the idea that all women were meant to be mothers. God knew how His world would have to be run—like a great orchestra—and some must finger violins, and some blow on horns, and some beat drums. He organized it so, and gave to each his part—and then the poor, stupid old orchestra lost sight of the Director and went all to pieces with all trying to be first violins.

Did you ever watch one of these non-maternal mothers in her home-nest? Even when she does her best, lashes herself to her job, how all at sea she is, never knowing the right thing to do, never thinking of the right thing to say, never having on tap suitable advice or direction? Muddled, puzzled, for ever harassed, she stirs with jaded spirit amid chaotic disorder. Maybe she has a gift for housekeeping and runs the house for the sake of itself, never for the sake of human happiness. Maybe she has no gift for housekeeping; nothing is ever put to rights, meals are never on time or made interesting with happy variations; all is at loose ends without head or heart or administration. Let disaster come, the death of the bread-winner, financial losses, and she deadens herself to her problem with the opiate of books or clubs or what not—

anything to forget—while her empire sways and swings and totters to ruin.

But suddenly release such a woman, lift her out of the domestic situation, let her go—anywhere—to freedom, let her do even a little of the thing for which Nature gifted her—among flowers, or stars, or stones, or sea-shells, or germs—anything at all that is non-social, that requires no direction of human lives, no home management, no philosophy—and instantly she becomes organized in all her being, poised, all intelligent response. A new glory and a new youth come to her. Oh, she is never a woman to censure, this misplaced woman—but to pity.

But that other woman, that instinctive mother. Let disaster threaten her brood, and like a tigress she springs to their defence, every faculty awake, every cell and fibre mobilized, every instinct aquiver. She thinks, plans, works, with magic concentration for their protection, for their present happiness and future well-being.

Oh, it's never the situation, it's the mother heart at the helm that makes the difference, the mother devotion, the mother instinct for her own, for finding a way for them to be happy and to grow.

"But"—I can understand some objector insist-

ing—"by selective parenthood you would breed all great gifts out of the race—music, poetry, art, oratory, science, invention." Well, that is where you are wrong, for the most profound parental instinct more often than not accompanies these gifts. Look at Madame Curie, who has given the century its greatest gift—radium—and also well-mothered daughters. Look at Schumann-Heink, with her great voice and her great heart and her great family. Many of the finest types of actresses are the most devoted mothers. A poet who would be named poet-laureate of America—if we had poets laureate—is all father-heart, his poem on his four-year-old son being one of the most understanding expressions of fatherhood in the English language. An artist whose fame has circled the globe is so intensely father-hearted that he can never go away on the most fascinating of expeditions without taking his six children along with him.

No, I would breed none of the greatness out of the race—but, oh, I would breed love into it! Breed children who knew from the first opening of their eyes to the last closing that love enveloped all their being. I would breed hardness out of the race, and loneliness, and unwantedness, and repression, and rebellion. I would

breed sharp words out of the race, and harsh commands, and slapping, and snatching, and jerking. I would breed callousness out of the race, and coldness, and unresponsiveness, and indifference. I would breed out of the race the tendency to crime, the cruel flowering of thwarted designs in helpless little children.

I would divert from motherhood the woman whose soul is bent on polishing mahogany—I would relieve her of children and send her where she might polish mahogany all her days.

I would divert from motherhood that woman so obsessed with a book that her child's voice, coming up to her out of the wilderness of his young ignorance, is for ever an unwelcome interruption. I would free her of the child and send her to a world of books.

I would divert from motherhood that woman so absorbed in flowers that the face of her child appearing before her is only a signal for an order —another package of seed, a trowel, more fertilizer; whose eyes are so filled with flower faces that they never take in the little human face hungrily asking for love. I would free her of child faces for ever and send her to work among flower faces only. The most unloved—and later the most unfortunate—children known to

my own childhood were those of a woman to whom all other women went with their plant problems. Consumed with this one mania, she never had time to make her children pretty dresses, to remember their birthdays, or note their comings and goings. One became an illegitimate mother; one married wretchedly and died young; one went into the army, became a deserter, and paid the penalty.

I would divert from motherhood that woman with an antipathy to the intimate ways, who never expresses her love in endearing terms or touches or tender smiles. I would divert these walled-in, self-contained women from motherhood and send them to work in laboratories where matter has no feeling, and feeling is not needed to penetrate the mysteries of matter.

I would divert all stiff, cold, purely career-minded, purely housekeeping-minded, purely student-minded, purely pleasure-minded, purely go-minded women—I would divert all women who lack the passion for human service—for love implies human service—I would, in brief, divert every woman in whom the maternal instinct is not the dominating instinct. And I would take chances on any loss to the race by reason of this diversion being more than made up by the

coming into existence of a crop of universally loved—expressively loved—babies and homes and households.

The slow progress of the world is all because there is not enough love in it, and there is not enough love in it because the real mothers haven't done all the mothering; and the real mothers haven't done all the mothering because always, in the past, marriage was the only honourable calling for a woman, and all women rushed into it. But life to-day offers many honourable callings—a calling for every gift. Then let me implore you, you women at the turning of the ways, in the interest of unborn humanity, of more love in the world, of peace on earth, unless the maternal instinct dominate you—unless you crave your own babies, crave a home, feel eager to begin feathering a nest with the softest, gentlest down of pure, high love—unless all this be paramount with you, stay out of marriage. Turn your steps toward science, to the laboratories, but keep your hand off this sacred human problem!

Perhaps the maternal instinct dominates the majority of women: I do not know; I am no statistician. But I do know there are enough who do not have it to botch the job, well-nigh to wreck the world. Then leave maternity—with

self-respect and understanding. Leave it, turn from it, find your own high and honourable calling. But you who have the gift, oh, you most sacredly gifted among women, you first violins in God's great orchestra—accept the call of Nature, find your mate, and do this greatest of all earthly work. Find in the knowledge that it is God's greatest work your unbending staff and stay, your reason for being. The child puts you in the race, into the future; makes you of the long, unending stream. Then go up to God, its hand in yours!

XVIII

SHALL I MARRY THIS MAN?

THERE is one comforting thought regarding this upset old world of ours, and that is, that though changing boundaries may spoil this year's geographies for next, changing styles make yesterday's clothes impossible for to-day, changing standards shock the great-grandmothers into their graves—still there does exist a world of stability, into which we are rooted deep, where there has been no change since the universe started on its way, and will be none till the last meteor explodes into space: and that is the world of natural law. Granite wears away into soil, mountains tumble into the sea, the sea lifts again into mist, nations come and go on the earth, but the natural laws of man stand as eternal sentinels at every door, there at the dawn of life, there till the last breath is drawn, immutable, unvarying, persistent.

We readily learn physical laws—that fire burns, that cold freezes, that ice melts. We vaguely learn a few spiritual ones—that love

begets love, that hate begets hate, that we receive in proportion as we give—though we are inclined to take these as moralities rather than laws and thus lessen their weight. But there is one basic, primal, all-important law of life that should be shouted from the house-tops, proclaimed from pulpit and platform, taught babes in their cradles and children in schoolbooks, and that is the law of human blend: the law on which harmonious companionship is based, on which marriage should be founded, and the disregard of which in this most sacred, intimate comradeship is, I believe, the one unforgivable sin.

The elders have been needlessly dull-witted —even cruel—in dealing with the young in their matings. They have not helped them to a realization of the law at a time in their lives when the power is in their hands to curse or bless all their future years—the power without the understanding. Love has been a great joke, something to smile over, something connected with mooning and spooning, subject for poets and fictionists, or sordid sensualists. No one has taken the matter of human blend as a law of Nature and attempted to make it clear to the curious mind of youth. We say we "like" this person, we "love" that, and these two overworked, mis-

applied words have been about all we have had on the weightiest subject in the universe. We have talked about love, at it, around it, mixing up the main issue of mating with economic considerations, but when it comes to making a clear, scientific analysis of what we mean by "love," and why it is absolutely essential for a real union, we have dodged it like a plague.

What is the reason for this? Is it possible that the generality of people do not sense Nature's law, written plain, "These shall marry, these shall not"? Didn't they arrive at any understanding of this law, all those generations that went before? Did their mistakes and blunders and tragedies teach them nothing? Are parents so blind, so dense, so poor at tracing results back to causes, that they wholly miss the lesson of their errors? It would actually seem so, for the greatest of human tragedies goes on and on, and the results work sadly down through the generations, and no one seems to become any wiser, and no young person is instructed, and getting the world mated is just about as haphazard a matter as ever it was.

To make this clear, let us imagine the earth moving through space on its young, unpeopled way. A lovely young breeze blows up and goes sailing gaily across green fields till it runs up

against another breeze going in the same general direction. They blend into each other and race on to the meadows, kissing the flowers, topping the long stems till they sway happily, bending the shrubs, playing in the treetops, and out across the blue sea, rippling its surface and leaving in their wake lively little whitecaps dancing in the mist. Now that's a correct mating.

But just suppose that venturesome little breeze should run squarely up against another breeze going in the opposite direction, and instead of passing each other by after a bit of a skirmish, they stop and mingle. Instantly we have a whirlwind—dust is raised—daisy heads snapped off—and they are up in the air about nothing, carrying everything they touch to destruction. Now that's an incorrect mating.

Every human being is as much set on an individual course as was the little breeze, and each is intended to go right along following out his natural bent—I refer to normal people, not defectives—till he runs up against another going in his general direction, with whom he naturally falls into step. When this happens—according to the primal law of nature—we have a correct mating; and this—according to our nomenclature—is "love." The trouble is, we use the word without comprehending its definition. We

do not analyse love and see that it means kinship, the possibility to blend, to understand because of a certain likeness. The reason it is necessary for you to "love" a man to marry him is not in the least a reason of sentimentality, but of law. You cannot blend with him by decision of will. Unless you do blend, you don't and that is all there is to it. Oil and water are both good elements, but they can never, while the stars shine down, mix. Though you stopper them up in the same bottle till doomsday, the water will for ever remain water, and the oil will for ever remain oil.

Some people have the mistaken idea that when they take a "dislike" to a person—when, in other words, they do not blend with him—it is Nature's warning that there is something bad about him, something to avoid. Maybe there is—there is about most of us; but Nature is not warning you necessarily about something bad—merely bad for *you;* there is no blend there, can be no blend. So many uses in the world call for so many different types, and human antagonism is Nature's invention to keep up her stocks. It's as if she were flagging you, "Take warning!"

You may meet dozens of what are called "desirable" young men—though in our faulty social

system few girls do outside of college—and they all leave you disinterested—there is no blend. Then you meet one about whom there appears to be nothing very special, but instantly your whole being lights up in response to him. It is old Nature signalling you, "This man is for you." He may have ruined his possible happiness by some previous misdemeanour incompatible with a happy union with any girl—this is where physical eugenics comes in—and you may have to let him go by, and travel on alone till you meet another who blends, but by nature he is for you. Such a kinship is the very wine of life. Without it, a companionship between two people is as drear as a November wind. With it—though all material blessings are absent—there is continual inspiration. No problem is too hard, if there is a possible answer. But when you engage on an unsolvable problem, one that should never have been set—like mating without blend—then all your effort will go for naught. Going through the motions of love will never create the emotions where there is no kinship. As things that made the union possible die away, the breach will widen. The situation is unfixable.

And you, young man, are having a similar experience. You meet the most popular girl. Your sporting instinct is aroused—you'd like

to dash in and carry her away before everyone's eyes. But somehow, she closes you off, chokes back your best stories, deadens your spontaneity. You think things will be different, once you are married, but they won't; they will get worse. It will for ever be a case of sparks on wet wood; nothing catches; nothing burns into power or beauty; there will never be a conflagration of the soul. It will be no one's fault. There is no blend, that is all. You will be trying to run afoul of Nature, and it can't be done. Nature is one old dame you can never fool. She knows —she gave you warning—and you will be calling down on your own head the consequences of disobedience.

Now, there is a girl in a far corner, a pale girl in a quiet gray gown. You meet her, and instantly you wake into your full powers: you tell your best stories, laugh your heartiest, have the finest kind of time. Funny; you don't see much in her—not so very pretty—not exactly stylish—but you are all response to her. Well, she is the girl for you by the law of blend. Never mind her complexion, her quaint little dress. Old Nature is looking out for you. She's given you the danger signals and the safety signals. Follow her.

Do they do it, our young people? Sometimes,

when other things harmonize with the main harmony—when clothes, height, colour of hair, eyes, and a few other perfectly extraneous considerations measure up to preconceived ideals; when the boy belongs to "our set," when the "other girls" approve; when the girl is a "good-looker" and knows all the new dances. For these youngsters are the most unconscionable snobs on earth. The freest in their matings of any other young people in the world to-day, not fortune hunters as a rule, still they choose for trivial surface reasons; and they marry because they are tired of the town, or tired of teaching, or have been out of college long enough to begin to worry about being "old"—maybe three or four years—or it promises excitement, with pictures in the papers and everything, or all the other girls are getting married. They are in the strangle-hold of the immovable, unshakable code, "Do what all the 'other girls' are doing!"

And as for the parents, the father's one inquiry comes resounding down the ages, "Can you support her, young man?" with a little side-line probe these later years into the youth's personal health. Then, having done his duty, he loses himself once again in his newspaper, and Mother begins to hemstitch linen. And in

the next breath these councillors are expressing concern over the increasing number of divorces.

Does any one take this girl quietly to one side and say to her: "Are you sure he is the one for you, my dear? Stripped of every pleasing accessory, would you be just as eager to marry him? Is his the hand you would instinctively reach out for—in sudden danger, in shipwreck, in death? Does your spirit fly to him as unerringly as a bird to her nest?"

I asked a dozen wives, picked at random, how seriously their mothers had ever talked with them of the necessity of feeling really blended with—in love with, if you like the usual term better—the men they were to marry. And not one of the dozen had been given so much as a hint of its importance. One mother had reproved her daughter for not displaying more pleasure on receiving letters from her fiancé. Another had taken her daughter to task for her "catty" ways with the man she was to marry. Another was shocked when her daughter mentioned the possibility of breaking her engagement, and her only response was, "What will people think, with the cards out and everything?" Some of these marriages were happy, some colourless affairs, but with one and all there had been no

mother-help on the vital consideration in making the new contract.

Girls of to-day imagine they are different from girls of other generations, that they are a special breed of their own. And sometimes, observing them, I think they are, too—in many respects a very good breed with their independence and efficiency and their way of facing facts frankly and their fine comradeship with their men. I prepared to entertain a very young bridal couple on their honeymoon recently, and I planned a hammock on a vine-covered porch with volumes of new poetry handy, and a seat in a summerhouse under the trees, and gave others orders to stay away from sequestered nooks and corners that honeymooning might be carried on with a suitable background. But goodness me! The poems were unopened, the summerhouse neglected, the hammock not even seen. The two came downstairs soon after their arrival, the girl wearing common-sense shoes ready for a walk and interested in finding a tennis court and golf links. At breakfast they wanted to know what I thought of that new book on "What's the Matter with Labour?", and how did I feel about the Russian situation, and was the little theatre thriving in our town? I never once saw them

holding hands, or letting languishing looks fall on each other, but I did see the finest sort of comradeship, and I believe they are as madly in love—that is, form as perfect a blend—as any two who ever came under my observation.

But all this modernness, all this knowledge of the world she lives in, which characterizes the best type of the girl of to-day, by no means does away with the old primal law. On the contrary. Its operation is even more inexorable. The old-fashioned wife lived more in a world of her own, taken up wholly with the duties of her realm, and there was not the same sort of companionship between her and her husband that there is between married couples to-day. They played different games—she with her quiltings and tea parties, he with his sports and clubs. She was the caterer, he the provider. When they failed to blend, it may not have been quite so trying, as they were not so much together. But to-day, with the two together in everything, from salads to politics, the blend is paramount. If tastes are dissimilar, if they do not love the same sort of play, understand the same work, enjoy the same arts, books, music, the theatre, then they will clash more fiercely than did any old-fashioned couple. Where the latter considered marriage final and endurance a virtue—

especially on the woman's part—and family skeletons natural members of every household with deep closets in which to hide them, the young people of to-day regard marriage more as an experiment, endurance as an obsolete word, and they chase out the skeletons and air the closets. Flippantly, all too often the modern girl says of marriage, "Oh, well, I'll get a divorce if it's not a success." Many young wives even assert that they had a premarriage divorce agreement with their husbands. Such flippancy arises, of course, from lack of knowledge. "They know not what they do." And so they go recklessly into unions with uncertainty in their minds and a remedy ready, and they apply it on the first appearance of friction without real cause, and we have our modern divorces, which the wiseacres view with alarm, but with little apparent understanding.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Knowing so much about life, knowing so many words with which to rattle on familiarly about the big problems, these young people think they know it all, the cures as well as the ills, and they run risks they would not run otherwise. The truth is, with all their big talk they are as babes in arms, realizing as little as the youth of any age what they are doing. They cannot realize, in

their inexperience, that anything so intimate as a marriage cannot be dissolved in a divorce court. The legal bonds can be severed, the responsibility ended, the tape that ties snipped, but the soul of a girl who has entered marriage is a new soul, bathed in a new experience, awakened to a new unfoldment. She has pushed back the sacred door that leads to creation, she has stepped within life's holy of holies beyond which lies motherhood. She has given her youth and the promise that is in her, she has given her wonder-innocence and the glory of her unfolding, and she cannot get them back again. She cannot go out from it all and close the door softly and step again into the shoes of girlhood. She can never give to another man what she has once given mistakenly. Her gift—when she finds her mate—will be a different gift than it would have been had she found him first. She can bring the sacred freshness of girlhood but once to the gates of paradise.

Suppose, on the other hand, there is that puritanical conscientiousness in the minds of the two who have married that will make them stick it out under any and all conditions. Suppose in this case both parties to the contract are good people, but there is absolutely no blend, not the slightest iota. This happens often:

the two have not known each other well, have not understood the law of blend, have not been left alone without the neutralizing agent of a third party, their families made the match; or he was regarded as a "good catch"—that most stupid of last-generation superstitions, as if any man were a "good catch" save to the girl to whom he by nature belongs! At any rate, it has happened, and here they are, tied up tight and fast, without one foot of common ground between them. The friction that arises is not the usual kind, which sometimes wholesomely clears the air, but the nerve-racking friction of a saw going steadily against the grain. One is a direct poison to the other; one cannot come into the other's presence without instantly suffering a coldness of spirit, a sense of depression, a positive repulsion. The more sensitive of the two suffers the more keenly from the fact of the other's presence, while the other suffers from the apparent indifference of her mate. The man, we will say—it is as apt to be the woman—the man is doing his best, but he cannot control his reactions; the minute he enters his own house, his spontaneity dies out. He struggles with the situation, the tension shows in his face, his nerves are all a-twitch, and a sense of dread hovers over and darkens his whole life.

He goes away on a vacation, and instantly everything brightens up for him. He looks back on his experience as on a nightmare and hates himself for his part in it. He will return and hold fast to his happier mood. He braces himself for it and sets out. But within the shadow of the home door, the old blackness is back upon him. Again and again he tries; he never gets the best of it.

But the children of such a union are the real sufferers. Some inherit from the mother, some from the father, some elements from both that eternally war in the one nature. There is no happiness in the home, no harmony anywhere. Antagonisms arise between brothers and sisters. Little children that ought to be the very cheeriest flowers in the whole garden of life are gloomy, brooding, and black-spirited. Naturally, they make their escape as early as possible. And once again the seeming miracle is worked: among strangers they become the merriest, liveliest of young people; they gain health, and poise, and happiness—and hope. Perhaps the very one in whom the mother saw the least promise—being the most sensitive, she became the most deadened—pale, lackadaisical, spiritless—blossoms out into brilliance, as if a heavy board had been lifted from a little new plant try-

ing to grow in the dark, under a weight. But let her return to the old home, and the same story is repeated; she is forlorn, alone, strange. She goes running from room to room in her homesickness, trying desperately to find something to welcome her back, something that spells warmth and love and understanding. There is no response anywhere.

This is the most tragic of life's possible situations: a girl for ever a stranger to her own mother; a mother to endure the pains of child bearing—and have no child. Have I drawn the picture too black? Ask one who has lived it.

A harmonious home is the greatest drawing card on earth for more harmony: a chaotic home is a drawing card for more chaos. Like for ever attracts like. We are prepared to act sanely and wisely and naturally only by a sane, wise, natural environment. In chaos, in the midst of nerve-racking irritations, we are liable to make a desperate leap—and leap to desperation. Many an ordinarily gifted girl makes the happiest marriage because she is living in a state of comparative harmony, while a very gifted girl, lacking this harmonious environment, makes the least happy marriage.

American homes are the strength of the nation, and the individual home is the strength of the

individual. Success in every direction tends to follow family solidarity. The strength of the Jewish people lies in the Jewish home: they are all for each, and each for all. A success with one member, and he helps all the others to success; a failure—and all the others lift him again to his feet and hold him there till he is solidly grounded. When you build up a home through building up its members, you add strength to strength: the family faces life as an unbroken phalanx. But when the home must be quickly deserted, when the young must scatter and build alone from the ground work elsewhere, when there is no united headship, no centralizing of effort, no family partnership—then indeed is the individual life hard and the individual success difficult.

Will you, then, young girl of America, try to hesitate before you risk laying a foundation for a home that can never be happy, for children who will for ever miss the rightful heritage of parents united? Will you try to realize that Americans are a sensitive people—we are not the stolid, bovine type—and correct mating is particularly necessary for happiness in our method of life, our universal domesticity of nature and habit? Will you, then, test yourself and that prospective mate in every possible way before you risk so much unhappiness in the

world? It won't all be yours, you see; you will be putting it on others innocent of blame. Will you, then, know this man well, in walks and talks and daily companionship, know him aside from the home he has ready, from what the "other girls" think of him, from the standing he has with your parents, from his own will and wishes regarding you? And then—after all the tests possible—if there is lacking that sense of close kinship, of joy just to be with him; if you do not respond to his moods, if he does not respond to yours; if the matter is not just right between you two, for old Nature will give you the tip if you pay attention—then have the courage to be honest, to stop—and wait. For your real mate will come; he is in the world somewhere, multiple, no doubt. We are not limited to one blending. Even as we can have a number of friends, so I believe there is for each one a number of possible mates. Wait—wait. And when he comes, in your wondrous joy you will fall on your knees and give thanks that you waited.

For a true mating is the most fortunate achievement possible to life, and an untrue mating is the most unfortunate. Live, then, for your glory-moment, you modern girl who are so wise and so independent. Be wise in this,

that you will refuse to marry till you find the right one. And be independent in this, that you will marry him when he comes—physical conditions being wholesome—regardless of extraneous considerations. And in doing so, you will prove yourself both wise and independent above many who have gone before you, worthy of the claim to superiority which you sometimes too complacently assume.

XIX

WHEN SHALL A WOMAN DIVORCE HER HUSBAND?

WHEN shall a woman divorce her husband? When shall a captain give up his ship? You may answer, "Never," but that isn't quite right. "When he can't navigate it," is a truer answer. Now, don't jump to the conclusion that a woman is to be regarded as the sole pilot of the domestic craft, therefore the only responsible one. Far from it. But it's all very largely in her hands. She has staked the most on the enterprise, and she is the heaviest gainer or loser. The man has his business, his many absorbing interests tied up with the larger world; those are really his main concern. The children will be with her but a few years, then scatter each to the sailing of his own craft, to which she will become but a shadowy background. But with her this marriage is her world. The question is: When it begins to wobble around in her hand—when things look shaky for making any port worth the effort—shall she leap into

the first lifeboat and put off alone to the open seas—or shall she stay by the ship?

I do not believe that true-hearted women ever go into divorce lightly. I believe that with them it is the tragedy of tragedies. I believe they arrive at it only when it seems the only thing to do. But is it—always?

Let us go back to the beginning of man's evolution, when something first stirred in his Caliban soul, calling to him to lift up out of the mire. Let us observe him all down the ages, now slowly lifting, now falling back, a giant sunk in quagmire, pitifully struggling to free himself Suppose we say that humankind—with which we have been one from the beginning even as the farthermost bud is one with the tree's root—is still only about halfway up, unsteady on its feet, like some clumsy child just learning to walk. We have patience with the child. We know that it will stand alone some day, that that is its destiny, only it hasn't yet strengthened its muscles to the erect posture. We have patience in an aloof, academic way with the race.

But when it comes to the individual whose shortcomings short-change us, our patience slumps. We are squarely up against the great problem of evolution which is, that we do not all evolve evenly. We present a ragged, jagged

skyline, with high peaks of development here, and almost no start upward there. If this unevenness were merely between man and man, life would be a simple matter, for then we would all keep on our proper planes—like earth strata —and not interfere with one another. But such is not the case: each one's evolution within himself is quite as ragged as that presented by the race as a whole. The fervent, one-ideaed zealot may represent in himself sad, deep valleys of undevelopment to make up for his one high peak—the material for the structure to rise must be taken from somewhere. Every one of us—male and female—is quite wonderful in some respects and quite impossible in others. A man brutally murdered a defenseless old woman, but was so sensitive to the sufferings of a caged bird that he risked his life—and lost it—by stopping to free the little prisoner. A woman snapped at a child so harshly as to set his little being all aquiver with heartache, then went out into the street and put a man under arrest for beating his horse. The murderer had evolved beyond cruelty to birds, but not to humans; the woman had evolved beyond physically wounding a dumb animal, but not beyond spiritually wounding a child. All the cruelties are not of the cave-man type. As we have refined civiliza-

tion, we have refined our cruelties, and women are as adept at them as are men.

People mate knowing the wonderful peaks of development only, then come a cropper when they discover the valleys. Another difficulty is that with every single one of us—I don't care how highly developed—what we know is centuries ahead of what we practise. What we know, practised, would lift us into the millennium; what we practise keeps us in a sort of earthly purgatory. We may leap into light, but we must grow into making that light the unfailing light of our lives. We know that sharp words wound love, but we go on uttering them like bayonets thrust into the heart. As if to chide assurance, we are often caught in the very highest peak of our development. The most consecrated wife is deserted; the most devoted mother loses all her children; the financial adviser to thousands goes bankrupt; the philanthropist appropriates trust funds; the divine leaves his wife for his choir singer. More often than we realize, perhaps, the harsh judge is really condemning himself, the evangelist is exhorting himself. The mire still sticks. It's the human lot, the man-experience. If you think you are free of it, that's a sign you are hopelessly coated.

It's because of all this that we relentlessly law upon one another. The few who have the light are for ever trying to force and guide evolution, to make their light the light of other lives. These laws educate us; they form our standards; they mould our conduct. To go against the law is always more awful than merely to do the thing the law forbids; the written law places the crime in the scale of human offences. We grow up to one set of laws, embody them in our practice, outgrow their need or see a better way, and go on to another. The code is a sort of scaffolding to the building, torn down as the building takes substantial form.

Now, 'way back in the days when we made torture laws for criminals, we made a marriage code quite in keeping with the understanding of that period, which dealt with the isolated deed of a man rather than with his peculiar psychology. And with our advance in dealing with the criminal, we have not advanced one step in dealing with marriage. This antiquated code continues to educate women as well as men. It continues to say to them, "Here's a list of things you can't do and have your marriage endure, save at the option of the offended party." It almost puts it up to a woman to seek a decree. She can scarcely feel self-respecting otherwise.

Somewhat as in the old days a man must fight a duel to preserve his "honour," whether or no. It might be the last thing he wanted to do, but what would everybody think of his spirit if he didn't? There was the law. Now, with our marriage code, there's cruelty: a man strikes his wife—she has only to display bruises or produce witnesses. There's desertion—he goes away and stays for a while. There's infidelity—and that "other woman." There's non-support—he fails for a time as the burden-bearer. Any one of these charges may be brought against a man in the white heat of anger, personal pique causing intolerance, and the decree issued while all parties are "seeing red."

Every psychologist knows that no serious step should be taken in the heat of anger. No intelligent mother would accept Johnny's word about the fight while the tears of fury were streaming down his dirty, red face, or Jenny's while she is one blaze of rage. She separates the little scrappers, bathes their faces, cools their passions, and then gets at the truth—that while Johnny did strike her first, she first made faces at him, her more refined cruelty bringing out the original cave-man in the arrogant little male. The mother's decision is not based on the blackness of the bruise Johnny inflicted but on

a knowledge of the two personalities, and the fundamental cause of their clashing. She goes to sources.

But should a married pair of mature age, in the calmness of cool reason, come to the decision that they are not going in the same direction, that there is no kinship between them, no possibility of harmony, no slightest unity—that there exists positive antagonism—and should they come before the court and ask that each might be allowed peacefully to go his own way, the judge would rise up in the dignity of the law —that old, old law never revised—and hurl at them the awful word, "Collusion"! Two are not permitted to separate when both agree to it; when, put on the scales of human understanding, the problem weighs out that way—only when one is putting it over on the other, when one is hurting the other. As a mother might say to two children who remained coldly aloof from each other, "You've got to play together!" Then when they took to gouging out each other's eyes, snatch them apart with, "You sha'n't play together!"—so, with this decent pair, if they are to be freed of mistaken bonds, they must go out and commit some disgusting physical act and come before the court with blood in their eyes.

The very thing that will positively defeat an attempt to obtain a divorce—the agreement of the two that it is the wisest course—is one absolute reason why a decree should be granted. The two first agreed to the union—it wasn't entered into against the will of either—and the two should first agree to its being dissolved. Their reasons should remain their own affair, and the public prints debarred from the details. Antagonism is recognized as a potent force in chemistry, in the animal kingdom, and by psychologists in the human race. Two things antagonistic to each other cannot harmonize; it's natural law—which goes back of man law, and on which man law must be based if it is to be just—and successful. Every mother knows that certain of her children invariably clash, while certain others get along beautifully together with only occasional skirmishes. Every teacher knows that some pupils must be separated from others for their own—and the common—good, and that even at times some pupils must be separated from her and sent to some other teacher. She feels antagonism and merely transfers the child, not in anger, but in understanding. It's the only correct method. Many people have never personally experienced antag-

onism, so they do not believe in it. They think people could "act differently" if they only wanted to, but this is their limitation.

Bad conduct, on which divorce laws are wholly based, is another thing altogether. Bad conduct is never final; it's a flurry, a perking up of unpulled weeds, impudent little imps putting up their heads from that old original mire and waggling their noses at you—but the weeds can be pulled and the imps chased off the premises. If you do not believe this, just go into the history of great reformations and see how loathsome debauchees have turned into godly men. Look into your own acquaintances and find the changed lives here and there, sometimes almost miraculously changed. Always the worst outlaw becomes the most powerful force for good when he faces about. Sometimes bad conduct isn't so much the man himself as it is his ancestors. He harks back. It's the call of the wild. It's the early mire. Sometimes his bad conduct is inspired by his very self-satisfied wife. A relation so intimate as marriage is bound to produce friction at times. The "scold" didn't go out when they chopped up the ducking stool, and women can be the most aggravating when they make the least splurge. The tongue stuck out,

and Johnny strikes the blow; and we hear a lot more about the "blow" in the courts than we do about the tongue.

"I never lost my temper in my life," said a placid woman—but oh, the lost tempers in other people for which she was responsible!

"Did you have a good day, dear?" a woman would inquire of her husband, just in from a long day in the open, then go on with her reading or embroidery for another hour or so before starting to get the poor, starved wretch something to eat. And she never could see why she, so gentle a soul, should have so cantankerous a husband—for of course he was cantankerous. Why he couldn't just take her by the shoulders, point her toward the stove, and say, "Cook!" is difficult to explain. It seemed easier to break up the furniture.

It seems as if a man never can come out and say what's the matter with him. It's a part of his faulty evolution, I suppose, just as it is sometimes a part of a woman's not to be able to sense situations, not to understand unless a thing is explained, put into words. Never to "get it," as the phrase has it, unless a diagram is made. That "woman's intuition" business is all very well, but all the women haven't it—and some men have.

Now, when conduct alone tries the soul, when everything would be lovely "if only John wouldn't do so and so," when there is no fundamental difference that makes unity impossible, wouldn't it be a fine thing to be big enough to ignore the stupid, lumbering old law that recites to you your bill of "rights," and just take the case squarely into your own hands and be your own happiness doctor? Regard this as a case for a psychologist rather than for a jurist, and be your own psychologist? It may sound like rank teaching, but suppose, for argument's sake, that a man does prove unfaithful. Can't you recall that this was once the race habit, that man has only comparatively recently pulled up out of it, and that it's the human tendency to snap back when the strain gets too tense? Suppose he commits any one of the crimes for which the code will give you a decree: can't you put the thing in the same light, as the result of faulty evolution, or of too much strain—or both? If the former, have patience; think of the patience the Creator needs to have with all of us! If the latter, relieve it. Domestic life shouldn't be made to feel like a harness, but like a well-cushioned easy chair. More contented couples than you dream, perhaps, have a ghost that they could resurrect if they chose, from

earlier days when there was a trying period with disunion threatening, but the thing was got past, and now you are envying them their contentment.

I do not mean that it is up to a woman meekly to endure, as the old-fashioned teaching had it. Far from it! But this is an age of specialists, of probing for causes, of finding sources. It is an age when we are trying to study mankind a little bit, trying to understand the child, the criminal, trying to make our schools reach down into the individual mind. What better—what bigger—work can a wife do than to make a close, intensive study of her marriage? Why not take this man as her special job instead of throwing him off on the world at large? Someone has to do it; he has to be dealt with; there is no place of oblivion, no outer darkness, into which to cast him. Then, when he wounds by his ill conduct, why not put aside the personal grievance, put aside self-justification, forget the law, and get on higher ground? Imagine yourself an engineer going over a new and difficult grade; imagine yourself a watch-maker adjusting the most delicate machinery; imagine yourself a musician preparing for the concert stage; and make use of exactly the same kind of *concentration on your job* that you would have to make in

each of these other cases ever to arrive anywhere.

Too many women accept marriage at the altar as a paid-up bread ticket, never realizing that there is a price for them to pay perpetually. Getting a certain amount of leisure, and able to make more by crowding the home duties ever into less and less time, they go in for "improvement," majoring in outside interests. They become self-centred, absorbed in their own cultivation. They become dull where their husbands are concerned. An absent-minded woman makes a mighty poor companion. An interested woman is always an interesting woman. The smartest woman—regardless of all else—is she who makes her home the pivot, herself necessary to her husband; who achieves a certain togetherness with him, a certain intimacy of companionship that could not be invaded by other undesirable interests on his part without her instinctively knowing it; an intimacy in which she could never be surprised, as many women are, by some astounding dénouement.

We are all mass mad. We sign checks and support movements and pass resolutions, holding back scarcely an individual human service for ourselves to render. "Manners!" exclaimed a hurrying woman. "Why, they should be

taught in the public schools. I'll have my club pass resolutions at once to have them taught there," and she swished on, perfectly contented with having landed one more responsibility on mass shoulders. All very well, but why be so responsible for the mass and so irresponsible for the individual? Why, with the individual, be ready to help him with his diet, his clothes, his patients, his sermons, his books, his friends—and refuse to help him with his character?

Why should a woman do all this, you ask, in this age when a woman has all the world before her? Well, what better can she do after she has once undertaken the problem, provided there is no basic antagonism to make her efforts futile? There is no way to be problemless: to give up one problem is to get another. Suppose she gets a decree, as the law invites. Suppose she turns to art—music—a profession—a business—another husband? Whatever she chooses, she will find she has only this same faulty old world in which to work out her purpose, other people of equally faulty evolution with whom to deal, the same sort of material that she has abandoned out of which to create her new life. To master any calling, she will have to go to its very foundations, quite as deep down as she would have had to go in that man's life to under-

stand him. She will have to work hard and hope hard and pray hard, and endure disappointments and discouragements. She will give up time and again only to go back and try all over once more. She may weep her eyes out, but she will find no more potency in tears here than in marriage. Success will flaunt her; failure will haunt her. She will have tyrannical masters; she will be wounded and bruised to the very core of her being before ever she comes out on top in any sort of a career.

Now, instead of getting a decree, suppose she looks upon her marriage as her career, her husband as her job. Suppose she puts into it organization, plan, purpose. Suppose she studies its technique—the things that build it, strengthen it, steady it to habit and custom. Suppose she examines her own plan after each failure for the secret of the failure—as she would in business or professional life. Suppose she learns the fine art of making time go pleasantly, putting happiness into the days—don't you imagine she will succeed here, too?

And if she doesn't—if failure seems to be hers in spite of everything—still she will not have failed in the larger sense, for she will not have failed in her obligations. No other person can really hurt you; no other person's failure can

really reflect on you—only that in which you fail yourself.

When we all learn that last and highest lesson still waiting for us in our evolution—that the art of living is the great art—and get it into our daily practice, I wonder what grist the judges will then find for their mills?

XX

THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

I ALWAYS love to think that everyone has a very special shrine of worship in his inner life: that there has been someone to whom he looks with uplifted spirit, as to something very special that went into the stream of his making, something that assures him in his darkest hours that all things true and good and beautiful belong to him by inheritance: that if it seems otherwise this is only the fault of devious invention. Maybe this is only my way of picturing to myself that larger spiritual inheritance which belongs to every one of us: maybe it is only a method of isolating a little bit of God—getting Him within range, even as a child lying in daisy meadows on a summer's day will draw his hands in a circle about his eyes, closing off all but a small portion of the sky the better to see it. We are all but little children, and sometimes we can better manage a living faith in the great eternal over-spirit and our inviolate kinship to it

when we settle this faith on some one definite being within our knowledge.

With me, it was always my grandfather, a clergyman of rare spirituality. I never saw him—but, oh, I have seen him always! A beautiful old man with a white beard and shining eyes, who loved little children.

An older woman once told me: "When I was young, he came to our house often. . . . In my childish mind I confused him with Christ . . . he was so beautiful and so shining."

Came a time when I could seek out the environment that had been his. In a certain small town I found people nearing the close of their own lives who had known him well and who took me to his last home, a low, rambling house now falling into decay, in the midst of trees gnarled with age, which in their infancy had known his gentle ministrations. Just an ordinary American roadside home, but made sacred to each of that little group by the aroma of the soul of the man who in his years on earth had lived in it. I went into the house; I wandered through its quaint spaces. There was a wide entrance hall, a room to each side, a high, steep stairway, and back of the stairway a door. One opened the door and said with deep reverence, "This was his prayer closet."

I stood looking into the small enclosure—the space in most of our houses dedicated to rubbers, raincoats, and umbrellas—and I thought: "This is the secret of that beautiful life that went out so long ago—this little prayer closet in the midst of his household."

All this season, wherever I have gone, I have found new little houses springing up like mushrooms by roadsides: tiny houses, cunning houses, often mere apartment-sized houses, their interiors suggesting that they had been lifted bodily out of the great hive of some apartment building and set down on good, honest soil, in good, open space, with birds twittering in trees and breezes blowing in and out of windows. Such happy little houses! Such birds'-nest homes! And it has all looked so normal and right and hopeful: and often and often I have stopped to see one of these dear little houses more intimately. Perhaps the family would just be moving in, proud of the new little house, pleased to show me over it. There'd be, generally, a large living room, a couple of bedrooms, a kitchenette, and a breakfast nook. The stairway? That, they would explain, led to an attic that could be used for a workshop, a playroom, storage—anything. And the door back of the stairway? Oh, yes—I'd be told brightly—that's

the closet for rubbers, raincoats, and umbrellas. Every bit of space utilized, you see. With what pride the new home-owner would expatiate on the economy of arrangement—and not once in the whole, long season of new-house visiting did I find a prayer closet!

"It's old-fashioned? Yes—undoubtedly. So many things are. And one doesn't need a special closet for prayer—and one needs all the space for rubbers and raincoats and umbrellas! Very true. But just what is the altar, I kept asking myself as I went from house to house, that is to make all these new little homes dotting America into shrines? Many are the homes of brides or young married couples with a child or two. Where is the central motor plant that will furnish the power to guide them in ways of love and beauty? What will give the keynote? And then it came to me how I was hurrying things. Why, of course: simple enough. Mother-Earth will do it. And I thought—realizing what Mother-Earth does for spiritual quickening when one is sensitive to her wooing, and what spiritual quickening does for human understanding—what a patron saint of America is the city landlord with his high rentals: for it is he who is driving families out of apartments into road-

side homes, out of prison cells into the gateway of life beautiful.

All this hiving up off the earth in crowded cities, walled in with mortar and brick, massed in with myriads of other buzzing bees of humanity—how it shuts us off from the regenerating influences! It is a fact that man cannot remain aloof from Mother-Earth and continue long to exist. Not only his physical but his spiritual arteries begin to harden, and spiritual death begins to creep over him. Nature gives him hints and signals: a hunger begins to gnaw; he craves the soil; and at last he buys a farm, or a suburban place, or just a little house by the side of the road, and moves out to it. He wakes in the morning, not to shrill whistles and the rumble of street traffic, but to the liquid notes of birds at their matins; he steps out of his doorway into the miracle of sap renewing dry stalks and limbs, of bursting buds, new leaves, new sprouts. All is as if the world were just now being created . . . even the bees come exploring, trying out the first blossoms, as if they never had explored before—they or their tribe—as if it were all new, new, new! He is in the midst of life's eternal renewal, of life's eternal profluence. Unconsciously he lifts his gaze to far horizons,

he throws back his shoulders, his face relaxes, deep wells of light come into his eyes, there's a whistle on his lips, a spring in his step—and Mother says:

"I believe, dear, this country life is doing you good."

Doing him good? Of course, it's doing him good—and doing everyone else good who goes into it and lives intimately in friendship with the earth, not merely off it, as though it were some huge trough for his physical feeding: who comes to see that soil isn't only soil, but a magic substance teeming with potential food and lovely raiment, and governed by laws from the same source as those which govern his own existence. Why, you cannot thoughtfully so much as cultivate a rose bush through to leaves and buds and blossoms without feeling a kinship for it, and a partnership with the Creator in the creation of beauty on the earth. As the rose unfolds, something unfolds within you—unfolds and spreads fair petals to heaven.

Just what do city-raised children fill their minds with, I wonder, to shed fragrance on their later years? What are the loved, eternal things, the things that never pass, that waited for their childhood and will be waiting for them at the far end of life? Flat, gray walls? Buildings

being wrecked to make room for new ones? Hot pavements? The creak of elevators, the rumble of cars, the clatter of the dumb-waiter, with milkman or iceman but a bellowing voice coming from the bottom of a dark shaft? Quarrels across the court? The fear of a burglar on the fire-escape? Neighbours who do not speak to one?

But the roadside child! . . . See that great tree? That's "base" for the games of hide and seek when one runs till exhausted with hard breathing and happy laughter; and in its 'way-up branches are birds' nests. And at night the leaves talk to one another—you can hear them if you listen very quietly after you go to bed—and sometimes they talk 'way into your sleep. And out under the big apple tree is where good old dog Tray is buried. He was the best dog! You could hitch him up to a wagon and everything . . . but he got so old he died . . . and there was a wonderful funeral with all the neighbourhood children in it . . . and now the dog star watches over him, through the tree branches. . . . And close by is where the birdies are buried, the ones that fell out of their nest in the big rainstorm, and you cried so hard to see them, so little and cold and no clothes on. Down under the grape arbour is where the little

girls play . . . they have a millinery shop with hats made of grape leaves and trimmed in burdock burs and pinned on with lovely thorns from the hawthorne hedge. Oh, there's everything in a grape arbour for a girl-child's joy. Then—just a little way, a half-dozen beseeching voices will insist—is fairyland. What's fairyland? Don't you know? Astonishment! Just you come and see! And you're dragged off to a tiny stream trickling over stones and dead leaves in the deep shade of a strip of woods . . . and you're shown wonders in mosses and lichens and tiny waterfalls and still pools . . . oh, it's fairyland all right; you can see that plainly enough—that is, if you had a childhood of your own that opened your understanding to the blessed, significant things.

And then the friendliness! The dogs that one knows and whistles to, the pet rabbits that belong to Jimmy, the old water-barrel full of tadpoles that belongs to Herbert . . . the smiles and pleasant greetings to the little boy as he trudges by, the friendly call. . . . Did any little boy ever live by the side of the road, I wonder, who didn't have his special pals? There's an old man who seems always to be wheeling things in a wheelbarrow, and allows the little boy to climb up on top of his load

. . . and stops at the kitchen door for a warm cooky that is handed out by a smiling-faced woman . . . he means to marry her some day, the little boy does. And there's the milkman who on his round lifts him and sets him high up on the most important seat in all the world . . . even permits him to hold the lines and call "git up" to the horses, carrying him clear around the neighbourhood and back again, regularly, in his distribution . . . what little boy, son of bank president or of bishop, would not choose, after such halcyon experiences, to be a milkman when he grows up!

A city child, pale with learning from many hired tutors, went to spend a summer in one of these roadside homes. Every day was for him a fresh, untrammelled penetration into the mysteries of Mother Earth. He would race into the house fairly bursting with his need to tell of his latest discovery: "Oh, Auntie, come quick!" he would shout. "The sun's setting right in the ocean!" or "Hurry, hurry—there's the queerest new animal—low like a snake, with a black nose like Fido, and gives milk like a cow!" Of course, one would hurry, what with all this recent discovery of antediluvian animals, for who could imagine it was only a milk-goat resting flat in the cool, deep grasses? And requests! "Show

me the eggs the cow lays," and "Where does the tide go when it goes out?" and "How does the gum get into the cherry trees?" and "Who planted the berries that are wild?" Then the neighbourliness: it was so perfectly wonderful to run and whoop and yell like a wild Indian with any number of little boys and girls: and there developed—where appetite had been finicky—sudden swoopings down in the kitchen for "bread 'n butter 'n jam"; and, the want filled, quick returns for more because "Harriet's here, 'n Herbert, 'n Jimmy."

Could one who had lived as a little child in a welcoming, friendly roadside atmosphere such as this ever quite believe, though in later years the world should throw him down, that humanity was not at heart the warmest, kindest thing imaginable? Could he ever utterly lose faith in the innate goodness of man? Could he ever get away from the conception of the earth as a vast, delectable playground filled with endless secrets and surprises awaiting his discovery?

Such a little boy, in Sunday school, listened without rapture to the teacher's picture of heaven where the streets were paved with gold and the air was filled with music from many harps. "I don't wanta go," he blurted out,

shaking his head positively. No, you would have to do better than that to woo this little soul, already won to the emerald earth and her leaf-carpeted footpaths, and the music of birds singing right down to him out of the sky.

I watched a little girl run out to the garden very early on several successive mornings and, stooping low, apparently whisper to the lilies. At last I risked asking her what it was that she told the flowers so confidentially.

"I tell them each morning just how many more days there are till Easter," she explained, "so they will hurry and be ready."

You see, she was "chums with the flowers," she had a sense of communion with them. Just compare the feeling she will have for the lilies on the Easter altars of all the rest of her days, with that of one who as a child had known them only as a pretty decoration that came out of a florist's window. A woman I know plants one good-sized bed every year just for the children—a bed with little paths running through it, over which the children are welcome to go, where they may closely watch the growing and blooming, and later feel free to gather their own bouquets. The beauty of it is that you cannot erase these early impressions; you cannot

supplant them: for they have gone in under everything else, and the aroma steals out at the most unexpected moments, carrying good only.

Intimacy with Mother Earth is not always easily achieved if left to the later years. An elderly couple, after the greater part of a lifetime spent in city flats, bought a small country place and retired to it. It was in a lovely strip of woodland by a charming lake, with everything to woo one to Mother Earth, but they carried out with them the habit of strict attention to routine duty. You would have thought, looking on, that God was much annoyed that this half-acre had not been made habitable earlier—that He might come at any moment and find it all unmanicured. They would rise early and without a glance at sky or trees or water bend steadily to the tasks before them, never once seeing the shadows on the lake for intentness on the laying out of brick walks; never once hearing the songs of birds for the steady rat-a-tat-tat of hammers putting up shelves to hold winter jam. Their redemption looked pretty hopeless. But old Mother Nature went right on, regardless of results—as we all must learn to do—and in the second summer she began to win. It would be, on waking, "There's that humming bird again in the honeysuckle vines, Mary," and from Mary,

"Sh—h! don't scare him away." And later they'd step softly to the door to watch a robin in his bath, and note the blossoms the night's dews had brought forth, and pause in the toast-making to throw crumbs to the chipmunks darting about the rockery, until by the time their own breakfast was ready to serve on the vine-latticed porch, they were stirred and alive to all the other life going on about them, at one with the creatures of earth, at one with Nature, at one with God.

How many little roadside homes these days are owned by bachelor women! No, the apartment has not sufficed, even for emancipated ones. A librarian bought for a song a Red Cross canteen, abandoned since the war, had it moved to a river-bank lot, and made it into the cunningest sort of a home nest. Two sisters, both in business, built for themselves a darling bungalow, doing much of the inside work with their own hands after business hours. A teacher made a most attractive home of a portable house: and all had grounds—a lovely bit of earth all their own for things to grow in and buzz over. One young woman told me she had tried for many seasons to sell her roadside home to escape the burden of caretaking, but every time, as she reached the house after listing it with a real-

estate agent, she would find the larks singing so rapturously in the dogwood trees that she would walk straight inside and telephone the agent that the deal was off. Sell the house—maybe: but those birds and the memories they evoked—no, she couldn't do it. Another was compelled to abandon living in a loved little roadside house, as her business called her to a distant city, but she kept the place, and it became in turn a summer honeymoon cottage for a young couple, a rest cottage for a convalescing invalid, a vacation cottage for a group that might not have managed a long season in the out-of-doors, otherwise, a nursery for children needing country air. It filled one human need after another and all with such joyous results that she decided never to part with it, but to keep it always for gracious lending. Houses acquire happy habits the same as people.

We forget, sometimes, how necessary as bread for life is an anchorage in a loved environment. It isn't merely thrifty to own one's home, or a safe provision for old age: these are reasons beside the point compared with the spiritual values. For the house by the side of the road takes hold. It touches the chords of love steadily into vibration. Tendrils put out to God through it—through its birds and bees and flowers and

fragrances, through wind and water, through beauty everywhere—through the beauty of law everywhere. Nothing is lost: the sweet dreams, the happy thoughts, the good intents, the fine companionships, the charming casual associations—the spirit of all these settles into it, builds up its atmosphere, makes our background. It's love's storehouse. Under that flowering fruit tree Betty and Jack were married; you never look upon the tree without completing the picture, seeing again the sweet expectancy in young faces uplifted. That rosebush was planted by good old Uncle Ben, now gathered to his fathers. That daphne was brought from China by a dear roving friend—it always makes you think of her, somehow, with its sweet fragrance that carries so far. There are remembered steps that brought joy—childish figures running about—an elder who gave wisdom—a young girl who added sprightliness—these are as paintings on the walls of sacred memory—as sculptured forms that never vanish.

Yes, we grow up to God as a trellised vine into the higher reaches of air, by the tendrils of love we put out, here, there, to everything in Nature, to everything in life. The tendrils may seem tiny, but they can hold up a mighty growth. And all the time America is so big, big enough for

everyone to have a little piece of land; and there are such vast forests of trees, trees enough for everyone to have a little house. Is there any excuse, really, for any of us failing to claim our inheritance?

XXI

THE HEARTHOLD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

DID you ever sit where you could look down upon a great orchestra and follow the technique of the performance—the movements of the conductor, the response of each player? And did you not almost lose the spell of the music itself in the absorbing spectacle of this perfect response of each man to his call? The full harmony and effect depend upon the accuracy with which each player follows the baton in the hand of the leader. Should he look to this neighbour or that, should his attention become unduly arrested by drums that are too loud or violins too slow, his own performance would be imperfect and the entire piece marred. He has but two responsibilities: to read his music aright, and to contribute, through his instrument, the chord the master needs. Thus is there harmony and a great theme expressed.

Our households are but orchestras, often appearing to us poorly selected: there are too many drums, too few violins, and no harps at all.

But whatever its character, nothing else in the whole of life ever approaches in acuteness the sentiment we have for our original household, the one in which we were born, in which we grew up. No matter how miserable we thought ourselves in it, how wretchedly we were misunderstood, how frequently anger shot like lightning across the domestic sky and undeserved blame seared our souls, this first household is for ever the closest thing to us. We may burn with indignation every time we think of injustices borne there, but nothing else can make us burn so deeply, nothing else can make us feel so acutely, and nothing else in the whole of life can approach the sweetness of its sweetnesses, the harmony of its harmonies, the contentment of its high moments of content.

"Oh, to live alone and have things as I want them!" you sigh—you who are making your way in a business or profession.

You attain this goal; you live alone; you have things as you want them—an apartment that just suits you, colour scheme, decorations, everything. No one now mixes up your morning paper; no one now disturbs your breakfast cream; there are no family portraits on your walls. Time goes on: there come twilight hours of dreaming, shadows begin to creep in . . .

the old home circle comes back . . . you see it in pictures.

Mother is reading her book; Father is filling his pipe in a pause over his paper; Sister is trimming a hat; she tries now the white wings, now the blue loops, turning the hat first this way and then that to get the effect; her face is intense—all her world's happiness is compressed in the result. It is such a vital matter that eventually Mother has to stop her reading and Father his smoking to look while she tries it on—gingerly, owing to the pins: then Father fumbles with some change in his pocket and brings out a shining gold-piece. "Go get you a new one, Daughter," he says in his kind, quiet way. Dear old Father! He always said so little and understood so much.

Someone raps at the door. You sit up, startled; the picture vanishes; you switch on a light. It is only the landlady after her rent. You pay her, and she goes. You are a thousand miles—and years—away from the old scenes. Sister is making hats and dresses for her own pretty daughters now. Father and Mother are gone. The old home—where is it? As a fragrance on the air. You have worked and endured to make your life go as you wanted it, you have no complaints, you are satisfied. But

you know, deep down inside, you would give all you have achieved on the long road just to open your physical eyes on the scenes of your dreaming; to catch once again Sister's furtive look of approval as she sees her pretty face in the mirror —young, eager, life all unexplored—to see once again the brooding expression in Mother's face and that patient look of infinite understanding in Father's eyes . . . yes, even to smell the old pipe again.

The household we establish is never quite so near to us: we are its creator; we know all about its mechanism; there is no mystery. But that first household, like God and the stars, is eternal. The child-mind cannot conceive of its having had a beginning; the adult mind cannot bravely face its having an end. It is the only human group we can ever know intimately. The household we create is very near and dear, it expresses our tastes far more truly, perhaps, and the members are of our choosing. Still the early days in the household of our founding will not form the vivid pictures in our later dreaming. Your mother always told you of when she was a little girl and what her mother said and did; and you tell your little girl of your childhood, and what your mother said and did: and she in turn will tell her children of her childhood and what you

are saying and doing to-day. It is the way of life. While the wax is soft, the stamp presses deep. Standards, principles, habits of that first household, rule, or there must be a terrific wrenching.

The most conscientious women often become so obsessed with their responsibilities as never to lay the burden down or look beyond it. Like a machinist in a great factory, who spends his life making over and over again the same small cog, their minds become narrowed down to their little part in the scheme, and they know nothing of the great machine into which their work fits. Having no vision, they can communicate none. One is slack in her everyday life and sends slackness out into the world through numerous daughters. One prevaricates and misrepresents to suit her own diplomacy and sends grafters out into the world to play crafty games with humanity as pawns. Parents mouth gloomily of economic problems in the hearing of helpless children and start muddy currents of pessimism in the streams of other lives. A self-absorbed mother pours the complainings of her wifehood into her innocent little daughter's ears, awakening doubt and distrust. False pride over limitations in the home shuts out the wholesomeness of free-hearted hospitality, and strife for appearances closes out

natural, everyday joyous living. Sons and daughters are driven from their own firesides to find the light of life elsewhere; unnecessary heartaches are engendered; unnecessary burdens are put on young shoulders. The strain of life is started too early; the new growth is blighted in the grain.

It isn't an easy thing for a group of human beings to live together under one roof in even the best of circumstances. Always there are too few bathtubs and only one tenderest cut to the T-bone steak. Housemates take unwarranted liberties; they wear one another's clothes and open one another's letters. There are coldnesses, heavy silences, and general daily clashing of people who are quite miserable together but would be more miserable apart. We all want to *be* right, but none of us wants to be *put* right. We assume an intimacy of soul just because there is an intimacy of habit. A mother asserts, "I guess I know my own child," then proceeds toward that child in a way to give the lie to the assertion. A daughter airily proclaims, "My mother doesn't understand me," ignorant of the fact that human beings rarely understand one another. We blame our financial condition for everything, thinking if we only had more money we would do so much better,

when the fact that we do so badly with what we have proves that we wouldn't. Our houses are so often better than our homes; our furniture than our atmosphere; our service than our words. I have often thought how illuminating it would be if only by some magic the home-spirit could be crystallized; how in some cases it would put the finest mansion into the shade, in others appear so poor a thing as to be more humiliating to the prideful than the lowliest hovel.

And how we cling to the hurts received in that first household! The harsh word inflames half a century hence; the scar from a thoughtless wound is livid at the close of life. A woman of eighty was still brooding over the wrongs done her by a hectoring, fault-finding aunt who for two years in her childhood took the place of a sweet-natured mother who had gone. She could not forget, she could find no way to forgive, and she carried the sting with her to the grave.

But after all is said and done, the family plan is a sublime one for human development and happiness. To see this, we have only to grasp the larger idea back of it, get it, with all its possibilities, full into focus. Let us just suppose that homes everywhere were founded on the idea, above all else, of creating a beautiful atmosphere

fit for the first life-impressions and directions of new little human beings. Let us imagine at the head of every home a mother interested above everything else in unfolding God's plan of life in herself and her housemates; a mother who not only knows, as a matter of intelligence and formula, but who vividly realizes that the God-nature comes into life with each of her babies at birth, and that her immediate household will make the greatest contribution ever made toward its retardation or development; a mother who realizes keenly that her day with her children is *now*, while they are plastic and inexperienced, and while they believe in her infallibly; that to-morrow they will be gone like a breath on the air, carrying the good and the bad of her with them.

Acutely realizing this, such a mother is bound to become a philosopher. Instinct will make her tender, and God-communion will make her wise. In her wisdom she will not expect always to understand her child. She will recognize him as a separate, potential God in himself, who always, sphinx-like, may elude her. She who carried him, bore him, nursed him, taught his toddling feet their first steps, may be for ever on the outside. Silent, watchful, with age-old, inscrutable eyes, he sits back in the flesh-house

she has provided, and looks on, wondering, perhaps, about her way on the inside—wondering what she really thinks and is, beyond that veil that ever shuts him out. Even more veiled, sometimes, will she find brothers and sisters. We go so far, then the veil drops, and we can go no farther. The God in us will not be gazed upon. Flesh-nature shades into God-nature and closes us out. We can never know any one wholly. We come nearest it when the deep inner urge is toward the same goal, when the God in us seeks to create in the same field, but even then understanding may be at this one point alone—two globes that meet only to diverge. But such things will not grieve the God-inspired woman. Though it is not given her to understand her child, it is given her to understand the laws by which his life is governed, and this is enough. Many of us dust books we can never read, closed books, but very dear because accustomed.

That she may make no mistakes, she will put herself on a parliamentary basis, allowing herself no more unjustifiable liberties with her household than she would with her clubmates, and giving them the same code toward her and one another. She will aim so to conduct herself in the privacy of the home as to recommend

herself to each one in the years on ahead when judgments are ripened. We go out from these households, and we rarely reassemble. In the world we acquire a measuring stick. How well will her conduct measure up? That is the test she will put to herself. Will the memory of her be as a steady glow in these lives? Or will it be as a bitter quaffing, puckering lips and drying up sympathies?

Being unselfish, she will allow none of the dregs of bitterness of any cup held to her lips to enter the young lives about her, poisoning them at the roots. Understanding the power of suggestion, she will make no pessimistic pronouncements. She will know that sharp retorts will not spoil with keeping, that doubt will not sour on the shelf, that the unspoken word may be the best word of the whole day. She will understand that daily habits of right conduct and well-achieved industry are as blocks of granite in the building of the man; she will assiduously apply the laws of ethics, but she will put on no irons, she will establish no racks. Over and above everything else, she will develop a beautiful largeness of freedom of thought and speech and act. She will Americanize the American home. "Oh, for a day that doesn't fit so tight!" cried an over-busy mother. She will

allow none of the days to fit too tight for dreams and sweet imaginings, for a little poetry, a little music, a little expressed appreciation of the beauty all about her in earth and sky and water, in tree and stone and soil. She will instil love of life and joyousness.

Children who grow up in an atmosphere of recognition of God as a vital, living force in their own lives—as the very life current in their bodies—and with a sense of the fine, high orderliness of the laws of life, the beauty and inevitability of them, as with flowers that bloom, and seed, and die, and bloom again, are apt to reach maturity with developed tastes that will keep them instinctively from that which is common, coarse, and sordid. They are apt to be too choice to be bad. Life has moved naturally from phase to phase without the shock of disillusionment and readjustment. For the laws of the household they have known have been the laws that rule in the larger world. There is nothing to be relearned, nothing to be uprooted. The beginnings have been correct. Mothers who have developed in their children a strong current of power for right action have little to fear for them out in the world. To the God-inspired mother, each new child is a new channel for power, a channel through which more God-wisdom may

flow out into the world, or more earth stupidity: which depends in great measure on this first household, and this in turn—barring exceptional circumstances—depends in great measure on her. Her thought is quite as much to shield the world from wrong through her child as to shield her child from the wrongs of the world.

It's a large order, the largest ever placed, but it can be filled by the woman who aims constantly to reach that high plane where tryst is ever kept with God, force ever interlocked with super-force; a plane from which she can keep clearly in view, like a master at a steering wheel, the onward sweep of life and the port to which she is steering. A plane where she can keep clearly in mind the fact that nothing so much matters as the spirit of things; that houses matter so little if only the spirit in them is sweet; that clothes matter so little if only the spirit clothed is brave and joyous; that food matters so little if only it nourishes the body, so that the body may become an ever more perfect instrument for the spirit's use; that the object of the whole performance of life is not the acquisition of *things*, but the making manifest of the spirit of things. Not the chair, but the comfort in

the chair; not the food, but the health in the food; not the house, but the atmosphere of the house. The physical is for a day; the spiritual, for ever.

"This one thing I do"—the words pierced the perplexity of a housekeeper who felt that her many duties were crowding out the very reason for the duties. And the "one thing" was to create a happy home atmosphere: from then on, she eliminated superfluities and made her heaviest investment in things that made for ease in handling her household machinery. She had fewer gowns and wore them longer; provided hearty dishes for her table, but those that required the least labour in preparation; installed hard-surfaced rugs easy to sweep and wicker furniture light to move; got rid of useless knick-knacks, added numerous big, soft, fluffy cushions for use, not ornament; had excellent lighting and a heating apparatus that reduced dirt and labour to the lowest terms. In this way she purchased for herself a good, long season each afternoon for rest, relaxation, and God-communion, out of which she came to her reassembling family poised, balanced, with something to offer them besides headache and weariness. Only recently, a daughter, now busy with her own growing

family, said of her. "It was always so lovely where Mother was!" Is not that sweet reward for the graying years?

Where is the future of all the unnecessary physical things? That extra gown, that expensive furniture from which the children must for ever be warned away? Says the mother in Alexander Black's great book, speaking of presents, "Give a me kiss, so I won't have to dust it." Where is the future of all the things we perpetually dust? Where is the future of fuss and flurry, of conflict and commotion, of straining and striving? Gone like chaff before the wind, or like thistles to start trouble elsewhere. But where is the future of the pleasant home atmosphere? The kindly smile? the sympathetic word? the gallant facing of a hard situation? Where is the future of restraint? of self-control? of unselfishness daily practised and imbued? Where is the future of wise counsel and wiser example? Of a joyous love of life and a living faith in God? Where is the future of happy childhood days? Here and there and everywhere out in the larger world—which is but a collection of all the little household worlds—here and there and everywhere, forming nuclei for more harmony, forming happy memories in lives that may have few other happy memories

in them, forming new carrying-on centres for keeping alive humanity's age-old dream of peace on earth.

We are sowers all, standing before the fields of the future: they spread empty, vast, receptive, under the mellowing sun. What seed are we throwing out to be carried by the winds of to-day into the harvesting of to-morrow? What leaves our hands to go on into life everlasting? Can anything on earth really matter but our gift to life? Then let us open our hands wide with only the good gift in them. Let us rid ourselves of all that is not worth reproducing, of all that will not help to make the next harvest one of bounding beauty and loveliness. Let us crowd deep down out of sight all that is ugly, uncontrolled, selfish, and dishonest; all that is lazy, slack, easy-going: all the grumpiness, all the blame, all the fault-finding—all the gloom and depression and doubt. For all these must go; all these must be worked out of the system before we can work our way up out of hatreds and animosities into universal peace and justice. And where can they be so well worked out as at the very foundation where they have their origin? Then why not get our own personal part done now? Why not work these poisons out before we make our contribution to life? Why send

them on into the future to be worked out by another—or to overcome another?

We are standing to-day with backs to tragedy and sorrow and blight. The great wide-spreading plain of life is before us, awaiting our planting. Can we—thoughtedly—offer for the sowing any but golden grain?

THE END

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